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EDUCATION SUPPORT PERSONNEL

WHAT WE WANT

WHY WE'RE PROUD

WHAT WE DO

WHAT WE EARN

NEA Support Person of the Year Peggy Bertollo

EDITOR'S NOTE

NEA TODAY
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Cover photo by Gary Emeigh.

If you work in a school district that's trying to save money by squeezing support staff and cutting educational quality, this magazine's for you.

On the following pages, you'll find the stories of dozens of NEA members who aren't taking education's budget blues lying down.

You'll read about paraprofessionals in Vermont who saved their own jobs by marshalling community support, Texas bus drivers who drove a major national subcontractor out of town, and secretaries and teachers in New Jersey who joined forces to stop a union-busting school board.

Yes, times are tough. But the pages ahead are filled with the inspiring stories of people who're doing more than just making the best of things. They're seizing opportunities wherever they find them—in their communities, schools, at the ballot box—and making things better.

And, as in years past, NEA's a big part of that change. This year, the nation's largest union and largest education organization includes a record 210,000 support members.

New and old, NEA members are making impressive strides. We hope, in reading this magazine, you'll find a story that inspires you to step up to the plate and make a difference, too.

Stefanie Weiss, editor

GCIU

RECYCLED PAPER

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Joe Di Dio

NEA President

Keith Geiger

This past spring I had the honor and privilege of presenting the first annual 1992 NEA Educational Support Award to Delaware bus driver Peggy Bertollo.

Peggy's an inspiration—a leader, an activist, and a key member of our education family.

This magazine is full of stories about valued members of our family. Like Peggy, the NEA members pictured here are powerful advocates for the values we hold dear—quality education, safe schools and working conditions, fair pay and fair treatment, unity and strength.

It's not hard to fill these pages with inspiring news. After all, NEA's education support members are among the most dynamic activists in our Association.

Support employees, in fact, make up the fastest growing membership group within NEA. In 1979, only 10,000 support personnel were NEA members. Today that number is well over 210,000.

To me, this growth represents one of the greatest successes of today's labor movement.

But increased numbers are just the beginning of the story. Support members are bringing new vitality and new ideas to the bargaining table and to the classroom. Your skills and wisdom are helping to make quality education a reality for more students every day.

You're bringing your credibility and dedication to community organizing and to local, state, and national politics.

And you're bringing new energy and passion to the building of a better, stronger, and more vital National Education Association.

For all these things, thank you. In return, I intend to do everything in my power to help create a brighter future for you—a future that provides the respect and dignity and justice you deserve.

WHAT WE WANT

Like Illinois paraprofessional Peggy Van Lake, we want job security, better schools, fair treatment and pay, and safe workplaces. Read about how we get what we want.

Michael Schmidt

WHAT WE WANT

Facing High-Speed Collision, Board Does a 180

School board's bright idea: "Let's lay off 13 parapros. We can get by with three."

When Vermont's Blue Mountain Union school board pink-slipped almost all its parapro staff in early 1991, it was taking the easy road—in tough budget times—to a balanced budget.

But the board had to think again. Less than two weeks after RIF notices went out in the spring of 1991, the Blue Mountain Union support staff rallied teacher and community support that forced the board to change its mind.

"We immediately surveyed every one of the 13 paras," says Joyce Kramer, local Association president. "We asked them just three questions: what their duties were, how many children they worked with, and what would happen if they were laid off."

Blue Mountain Union's single school serves about 550 kids, pre-K–12, from three towns. The survey showed that the parapros who got layoff slips were chapter 1, special ed, library, and kindergarten assistants.

These parapros had extra duties like supervising recess and the cafeteria. The average number of kids a parapro served daily was 65; the highest, 207.

The parapros got the survey results out to teachers, parents, and other community members, asking them to come to the board meeting where the layoff issue would be decided.

"People who couldn't get to the meeting wrote or telephoned board members," says Kramer. "Parents of special ed students told the board their children couldn't survive in school without our help. The board listened."

At the end of the meeting, when it came to the vote, no one was laid off.

"When people in the community saw our surveys and heard from teachers and parents about what we do," Kramer recalls, "they were outraged that the board would even consider riffing us."

Fighting a budget cut isn't always so straightforward, as the following items and the box of tips on page 5 illustrate.

▶ ACSUM, the University of Maine classified staff union, has brought four Unfair Labor Practice complaints against the University—and the employer has settled two of them already.

The complaints concern layoffs ACSUM calls retaliatory. After ACSUM members refused to accept just half of the 1991-92 raise they'd bargained, the University laid off some employees and cut others from full-time to three-quarter–time—slicing their benefits in half.

The two settlements put two members back to work with back pay. The other complaints, concerning retaliation and unilateral change in hours, were pending at press time.

▶ The Neshaminy, Pennsylvania, school board decided to make up a $1.1 million hole in its budget by cutting 29

Standing victorious, from left, are paraprofessionals Janet Park, Mary Hobbs, Joyce Kramer (front), and Judy Clarke.

Mark Sasahara

assistants and other support staff.

The 350-member Neshaminy Education Support Personnel Association went to work to save those jobs, handing the board a detailed plan to cut expenses in other ways.

The basis of NESPA's proposal: save by eliminating unnecessary work, not bargaining-unit jobs. NESPA also offered to take a 5 percent instead of 6.5 raise for 1992-93.

"We call board members, write to the paper, meet parent groups—let them know that when they cut our jobs, they're directly affecting the children," says NESPA President Dave Adamson.

▶ In Florida, Marion County school employees pink-slipped incumbents at a televised school board meeting, vowing to lay off all four in November and handing them pennies as advance unemployment benefits.

The board had shocked members of the Marion Essential Support Personnel and Marion Education Association by refusing to sign the contracts bargained by its own team—then pink-slipped every yearly employee in both units.

RESOURCES

Self-Defense: A Short Course

Experience with tough budget times and layoffs has taught Association field staff valuable lessons. NEA and state staffers suggest some tested tactics.

Bargaining

- ▶ Specify the acceptable reasons (specific drops in money or work) for layoff.
- ▶ Spell out the notice required for layoff.
- ▶ Establish the role of seniority in layoffs.
- ▶ Require that demotions or retirement be offered in lieu of layoff.
- ▶ Require that laid-off employees get time and help for job search, the right to substitute work, severance pay, extended insurance benefits.
- ▶ Ban use of other employees or volunteers to replace laid-off employees.

Mobilizing

- ▶ Ask everyone in your unit to help.
- ▶ If you're not in a wall-to-wall unit, ask the other school employees, including teachers, for their support and creative ideas.
- ▶ Tell parents, business leaders, media what would happen without you.
- ▶ If your school board's really broke, ask for a joint committee to find ways to save money.
- ▶ If your school board's just nasty, look for mistakes that lay them open to lawsuits and Unfair Labor Practice charges.

Losing Hours, Not Jobs

As president of the United Support Personnel, Peggy Gash (right) represents 1,900 San Francisco parapros. With the city facing a 1992-93 shortfall that's already tumbled past $10 million, Gash expects her members to be hit hard—but not by job cuts.

If not layoffs, what's coming?
We're looking at massive loss of income. The California civil service sets our pay rates, but it's the San Francisco school district's money.

So, instead of cutting our salaries, the district cuts our hours. If the hourly rate goes up 5 percent, the district will cut an hour off a five-hour day.

Do many of your members work such short days?
Most work no more than five hours; some work just two hours, or even one. That isn't a workday, it's a joke.

These aren't people looking for job sharing or part-time work?
These are, for the most part, minority women supporting their children. They're trying to stay off welfare. About 50 of them, in spite of everything, are in a program to go to college and become teachers.

Do you have any contractual protection against cuts in hours?
We've just gotten our legal status changed from civil service, so we can bargain a contract and deal with this problem.

If we agree to accept just a small raise, parapros who are working one or two hours a day will be able to come up to four hours at least.

Mike Spinelli

So, no layoffs?
We haven't had massive layoffs, but some principals think they can lay off parapros directly from their school.

Then I have to go around and tell them: You can't do that. We do have systemwide seniority rights, no matter what.

WHAT WE WANT

The High Cost of Safe Schools

"Every day, millions of students and school employees are exposed to asbestos, lead, and radon. This is unacceptable."
—NEA Secretary-Treasurer Marilyn Monahan (below) in testimony before the U.S. Congress, April 30, 1992

"Unacceptable" is a word Bill Pair uses, too, when he talks about environmental hazards in schools. Pair, an NEA member and engineer intern with the Dallas Independent School District (DISD), says maintenance workers in his district's 200 schools have been fighting unacceptable levels of asbestos for years.

Joe Di Dio

Asbestos exposure has been linked to cancer and various lung disorders that can show up decades after exposure.

To deal with the asbestos hazard in schools, the federal government has created two major programs—the Asbestos School Hazard Abatement Act (ASHAA) and the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA). Neither has been adequately funded.

"When I came to DISD in 1987, the district was contracting out asbestos removal work to private contractors," recalls Pair. Since then, Pair says, the district has found it more efficient to do the work in-house.

So DISD has set up a district asbestos removal office. Those willing—and trained—to do asbestos removal work earn an extra dollar an hour.

"It's an issue of privatization," says Dallas Educational Support Personnel Association (DESPA) Vice President Howard Sanders. "Not only do our members get extra pay, but we increase our value to the district—and save them money. In the long run, that may help protect our jobs."

Still, asbestos removal isn't cheap. Right now, the Dallas school district is spending $1.5 million from its operating budget—plus $176,800 in incentive pay to 85 of its workers. Despite appeals, Dallas has yet to see federal help.

"The federal government has been pushing compliance with its federal laws and regulations, but when it comes to allocating money for clean-up efforts, we get zero from the feds," laments Pair.

For the past dozen years, NEA has been involved in lobbying for safer schools—and the funding to make them a reality. NEA is now calling for:

► $100 million in federal funding for ASHAA, which provides federal loans and grants for asbestos clean-up.

► $60 million for clean-up efforts mandated by the Lead Contamination Control Act. Although the law has been on the books for four years, no clean-up funds have been authorized. Lead exposure has been linked to numerous physical problems—including irreversible brain damage in children.

► $15 million to rid schools of radon, a colorless, tasteless radioactive gas that has been linked to an estimated 20,000 lung cancer deaths per year.

In her recent testimony, NEA's Monahan told Congress, "Too often, when it comes to spending the money to protect children, we fall short. Let us not do so now."

Mel McIntire

Maintenance worker and Association activist Jim Hummingbird wears protective clothing to remove asbestos safely.

Dealing with Sick Building Syndrome

Stan Stansbury is a special ed assistant at John Hay Elementary School in Seattle, Washington. He's past president of the paraprofessional department within the Seattle Education Association, a 4,000-member wall-to-wall local that includes some 800 support members.

What is sick building syndrome?
It's the result of inadequate air flow into a room. Back in the '60s, before oil and gas were so expensive, buildings weren't very airtight.

Newer buildings are energy-managed so that less outside air comes in. As a result people are more exposed to chemicals, among them the foams and resins used in furniture and carpet.

How has sick building syndrome affected staff and students at your school?
According to a survey last year, about two-thirds of the staff have been reporting symptoms—headaches, dizziness, nausea, respiratory ailments, shortness of breath, and all manner of exacerbated allergy symptoms. Students weren't surveyed, but it's clear the number of cases of headaches and stomachaches reported to the nurse has increased.

What have you been able to do about it?
Two and a half years ago, a group of employees approached our principal. She was very supportive—but even with her backing we were getting nowhere with the district administration. So we brought in a formal group of union members to give us more clout.

Once the Association was involved, what happened?
The computer room was closed—after the teacher got so sick she had to go on sabbatical. (We made sure she didn't have to use sick leave.)

The copying and mimeograph machines were replaced, and an effort is now being made to balance the air flow. The district agreed to provide blood tests to all affected employees.

Finally, District administrators brought in health and safety specialists from the University of Washington and the Environmental Protection Agency. The district agreed to make a full-scale effort to replace the lining of the ventilation system with a state-of-the-art system.

What's your advice to others facing sick building syndrome?
First of all, take seriously even a small number of people reporting symptoms. Get help immediately for people who think they're getting sick.

Then monitor the corrective process—stay on top of the process from day to day. And finally, keep *detailed* records of what is happening to whom, and when. That sophisticated detective work will pay off.

RESOURCES

Publications/Videotapes

► *Building Air Quality: A Guide for Building Owners and Facility Managers.* Stock number 055-000-00390-4. 229 pp. Available for $24 ($20 for 100 or more sent to the same address). Send prepayment to: Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250-7954.

► *Environmental Hazards in Schools.* $2. Publication #2DT-2001. Environmental Protection Agency, TS-799, Washington, DC 20460. 202/260-7751.

► *Pocket Guide to Chemical Hazards.* 245 pp. Single copy free. Pub. No. 90-117. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 4676 Columbia Pkwy., Mail Stop C13, Cincinnati, OH 45226. 800/356-4674.

► *The VDT Book: A Computer User's Guide to Health and Safety.* 1987. 48 pp. $5 plus 15 percent shipping and tax. NYCOSH, 275 7th Ave., New York, NY 10001.

► *A Parent's Guide to Asbestos in Our Schools.* A 19-minute videotape with a 28-page leader's guide. $34.95. Bulk orders: 10 copies at 10 percent discount, 50 copies at 20 percent off. Send prepayment to Lark Communications, 5241 N. Lakewood, Chicago, IL 60460.

Phone Numbers

► Safe Drinking Water Telephone Line. Available 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. ET, Mon.-Fri., 800/426-4791.

► National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 800/365-4674.

► National Pesticide Telecommunications Network, 800/858-PEST.

Getting It Right the First Time

A good contract provides both income and dignity, and hard times make that protection more important than ever. Hard times also make a good contract tougher to get—especially the first time.

But, as 200 teacher assistants and interpreters in Illinois' Special Education District of Lake County have found, getting it right the first time makes a big difference in the long run.

Step #1, they say, is high membership and tight organization. Getting SEDOL employees together wasn't easy—the 200 parapros are scattered among 81 schools in 39 districts.

"And we were in fear we'd all be fired," recalls Mary Petak of Laremont School. "We just had to believe right would prevail—and it did." Hundreds of phone calls and many meetings pulled the members into a close-knit group, affiliated with NEA and its state affiliate, the Illinois Education Association.

The SEDOL Support Staff Association began work on a contract. Members suggested items to bargain, then voted on the most important.

The results, after eight months of tough bargaining: a good salary schedule, seniority rights, just cause rights for any disciplinary action, the right not to administer medication, sick leave for all employees, jointly developed job descriptions and evaluation procedures, and extra hourly pay based on length of service and higher education credit.

One major benefit that doesn't show up in the contract language: respect.

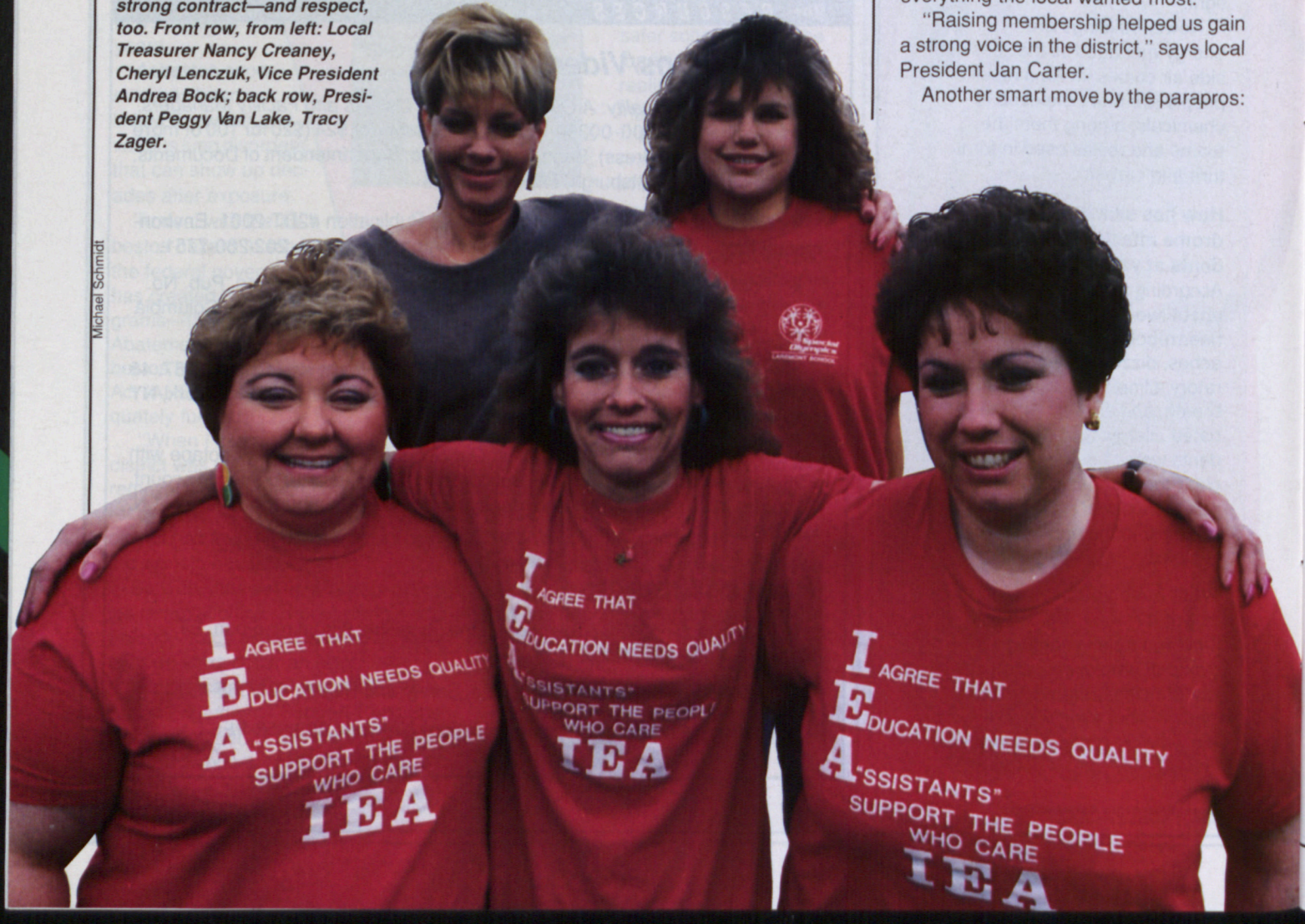
"Before," notes local President Peggy Van Lake, "we didn't have a way to stand up for ourselves. Now we're very proud of our contract—although we keep looking for ways to update it as times change."

Large, united membership has paid off for other Association locals.

► After St. Louis, Missouri, parapros used thorough outreach and a soft sell to build the membership—scattered among 23 districts—of their special education local, it took just three negotiating sessions to bargain a new three-year contract. The pact includes everything the local wanted most.

"Raising membership helped us gain a strong voice in the district," says local President Jan Carter.

Another smart move by the parapros:



Special education parapros in Lake County, Illinois, won a strong contract—and respect, too. Front row, from left: Local Treasurer Nancy Creaney, Cheryl Lenczuk, Vice President Andrea Bock; back row, President Peggy Van Lake, Tracy Zager.

Michael Schmidt

bargaining together with the teachers. "Whatever issue the teachers discussed," Carter recalls, "I'd talk about how that issue affected us, and we'd deal with it together."

► When the Globe, Arizona, school district withheld 1991-92 contracts from support staff, saying they might be laid off to pay for supplies, employees knew they had to have a union. An organizing drive supported by the Globe Classroom Teachers Association drew signatures from half the 92 possible members in four days.

"When people put their names on those membership forms," says Globe Classified Association President Gene Hawkins, "it showed the school board and superintendent we were serious."

The new union protected members and broke a salary freeze—but, says Hawkins, "the biggest improvement has been the change in the administration's respect for classified staff."

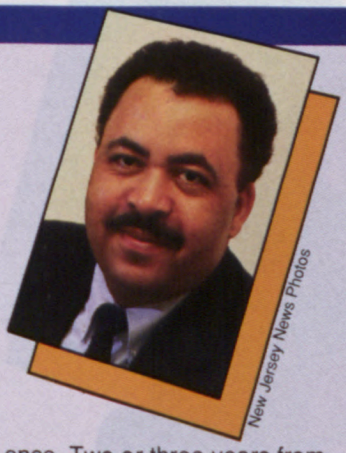
► Sioux City, Iowa, teacher assistants and secretaries held out for internal job posting—right up to the point of factfinding—when they bargained their first contract last winter.

Why such a fuss about job posting?

"You can't just walk in and be an expert school secretary," says Lorri Mahr, president of the Sioux City Educational Support Personnel Association. "You work your way into it. It's a matter of respect."

Bargaining Priorities

Ken Wiggins of the New Jersey Education Association (right) bargains for community college employees—support staff, faculty, and administrators. NJEA represents over 1,500 support staff in 15 community colleges.



New Jersey News Photos

What's top priority for the support staff you bargain for?
Health benefits. The colleges have been asking staff to share health care costs, but so far we've kept our fully paid benefits.

What's your secret?
Unity and determination. The members set the bargaining priorities—and they're clear about not yielding on health benefits.

Also, whichever college we're talking to, we stress that none of the others we bargain with has taken back health benefits.

What about pay?
State and county money for colleges is drying up, and raising tuition won't make up the difference. Two or three years from now, we expect our raises to be maybe 5 or 6 percent instead of 7.

Aren't you concerned about layoffs or pay cuts?
Colleges are likely to see which program costs most per student and try to drop it altogether. We haven't faced much of that.

But we all expect things to get tougher as colleges have less and less money.

What benefits do your members want in their contracts?
Many want tuition reimbursement or tuition-free classes. And child care on campuses. That's very costly—but it can make a real difference to staff.

RESOURCES

A Yardstick For Your Contract

If you're getting ready to bargain, you might find some useful ideas in this checklist, based on a Michigan Education Association model.

► Bus runs. Is there a clear bid system for runs? Are runs clearly defined? Is down time covered?

► Uniforms. Is the employer required to provide uniforms for those who want them?

► Shift premiums. Is there a pay premium for night shifts?

► Banquets. Is banquet work rotated among food service employees? Is it fairly paid?

► Building checks. Are custodial employees compensated for conducting building checks?

► Radios. Does the employer put two-way radios on buses?

► Paid lunch. Does the employer provide paid lunch periods and breaks?

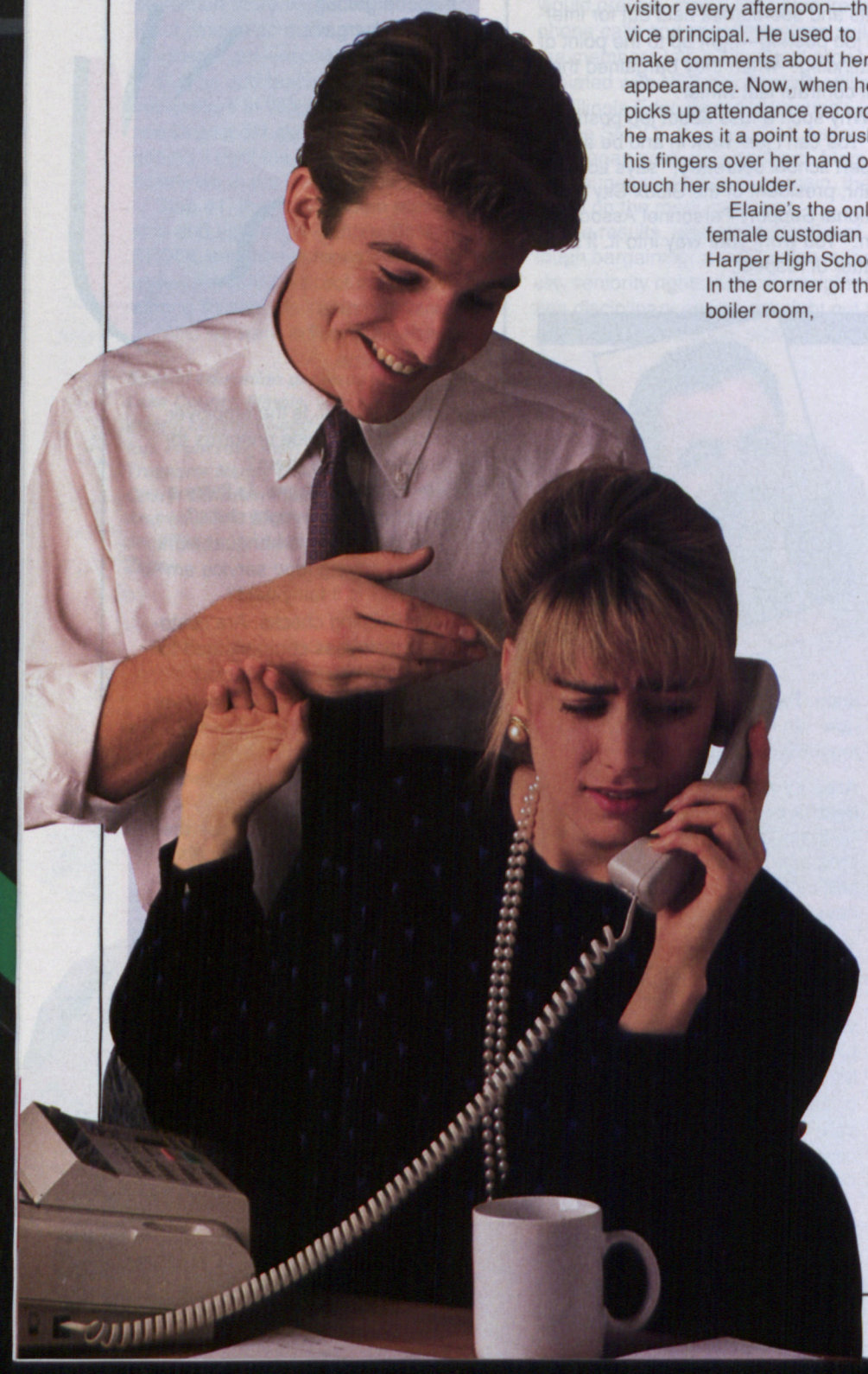
► Annual physical. Does the employer pay for all physicals required by the employer or by law? Is the employer forbidden to carry out covert drug tests?

► Pay equity. Has the salary schedule been changed to eradicate gender and/or racial bias in pay and benefits?

For a copy of the complete MEA checklist, write Gretchen Dziadosz, Michigan Education Association, 1216 Kendale Blvd., Box 2573, East Lansing, MI 48826-2573.

WHAT WE WANT

When Advances Are Unwelcome



Marcia, a junior high school secretary, has an unwelcome visitor every afternoon—the vice principal. He used to make comments about her appearance. Now, when he picks up attendance records, he makes it a point to brush his fingers over her hand or touch her shoulder.

Elaine's the only female custodian at Harper High School. In the corner of the boiler room, Elaine's colleagues have posted a pin-up calendar with photos of naked women. It makes her uncomfortable, but she says nothing.

Steven, a school bus driver, has begun to dread Monday mornings. That's because his colleague Linda has been asking personal questions about his weekends. He's asked her to stop, but she just laughs and says he's too sensitive about his love life.

Which one of these workers is being sexually harassed? If you said all three, you'd be right.

Anita Hill's televised charges and testimony last year raised national awareness of sexual harassment—and raised a lot of questions, too.

Just what is sexual harassment? According to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, sexual harassment occurs when "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature interferes with work or affects the work environment, or when your response affects your job status."

Lynn Whitney, attorney for the Pennsylvania State Education Association, has handled sexual harassment cases for years.

"There are two types of claims," explains Whitney. "The first is 'sex for benefits.' This involves requests for sexual favors, or verbal or physical conduct in which someone uses his position of power to get what he wants."

The second is a "hostile work environment—which could include sexually explicit photos or calendars, sexual jokes or stories, repeated questioning about one's personal life, constant staring or comments about appearance."

Both types of sexual harassment are illegal. And employers—in this case, school districts or school boards—can be held liable when their employees break the law.

What should you do if you're being harassed?

Pam Ryan, who directs NEA's Human and Civil Rights training on sexual harassment, offers this advice:

- Make it clear to the harasser you don't like his/her actions.
- Keep a written record of all harassing activities.
- Notify your colleagues of the problem. They can observe and corroborate your claims.
- Contact your Association leader or representative for help.
- Don't blame yourself.
- Help guarantee your legal rights by bargaining contract language that specifically bars sexual harassment of any kind.
- Encourage your Association to train its members to recognize and report sexual harassment.

Dealing with Harassment

Elaine Spondike (right) is a school secretary in Mentor, Ohio. She serves on the NEA Women's Concerns Committee and the NEA Board of Directors.

Is sexual harassment a women's issue?
Not at all. There are many cases of men being harassed. People have to recognize there are many forms of sexual harassment, and anyone can be the victim—male or female.

Why should education support staff be concerned?
Because everyone has a right to be treated as a human being. No one should be intimidated or frightened at work, or should degrade or harass another person.

You attended the sexual harassment workshop during the annual ESP conference. What surprised people most?
How common it is. Nearly two-thirds of the people in the room had either experienced or witnessed sexual harassment in their workplace. And when we were shown examples of sexual harassment, a murmur went through the crowded room as people realized it had happened to them, too.

What advice would you give to members who are harassed?
Whatever you do, don't ignore the problem, and don't resign. Go to your Association for help.

Joe DiDio

What can Associations do?
They can make sure everyone is educated about what is—and isn't—sexual harassment. They can take advantage of training that's available, so people know what federal and state laws say about sexual harassment. Information can keep us from becoming or remaining a victim.

Next, Associations can bargain contract language—or push for school board policy—that forbids sexual harassment of any kind.

Finally, Associations can intervene informally or file a grievance to stop harassing behavior. We have the right to work without fear.

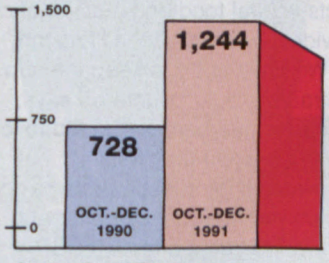
RESOURCES

Want to know more about sexual harassment and how to fight it?

- NEA's Human and Civil Rights division can help. NEA HCR offers training, workshops, and information through local UniServ offices. For information on available materials and training, contact Marilyn Hutton, NEA Human and Civil Rights, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.
- The Women's Legal Defense Fund offers a poster describing what sexual harassment is and what to do about it. To order, send $2.50 (for up to 10 posters, $5.50 for 11-50 posters, p&h included) to WLDF, 1875 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 710, Washington, DC 20009.
- The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission offers a fact sheet on sexual harassment. Contact your local EEOC office or write EEOC, 1801 L St., N.W., Washington, DC 20507.
- NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund offers a legal resource kit. To order, contact the NOW-LDEF, 99 Hudson St., 12th Floor, New York, NY 10013.

EEOC Complaints Up

Here's a comparison of the number of formal sexual harassment complaints filed with the EEOC three months after the Clarence Thomas hearings vs. during the same three months the year before.



Source: Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

WHAT WE WANT

Defeating Durham on the Rio Grande

This year school bus drivers in Brownsville, Texas, delivered a one-two punch to one of the nation's leading school bus service contractors—Durham Transportation, Inc.

Last year, Durham became the contractor for bus service in Brownsville, and the bus drivers— represented by a TSTA/ NEA local—had to become Durham employees.

The Association responded by creating a new private-sector NEA/TSTA affiliate called Union Bus Drivers of Brownsville (UBDB).

That led to Punch #1, delivered in January 1992, when the drivers voted for UBDB as their bargaining agent. The vote gave California-based Durham its first-ever defeat in a union representation election.

Punch #2 came in April, when the Brownsville school trustees voted 6-1 not to renew Durham's contract when it expired in June 1992.

How to interpret the Durham defeat? "The war has begun," observes Brownsville UniServ director Tom Puntereri (above). "Durham recently opened a Texas branch office in Austin, and Marriott [which subcontracts school food and maintenance services] opened one in Houston."

"We have to try to keep the subcontractors out, " Puntereri says, "because our members stand to lose too much when they get in."

The push for subcontracts by companies like Marriott, Durham, and ServiceMaster is affecting ESP across the country. Consider these examples of activity by ServiceMaster, the Illinois-based maintenance-services company:

► Last spring Ed Garner, a defeated Denver school board member, lobbied his former colleagues on behalf of ServiceMaster, and the board's subcommittee on facilities met with two ServiceMaster representatives.

According to *The Denver Post,* the board member who defeated Garner called his actions unethical. She also said the board had broken an informal pledge to the maintenance staff when the subcommittee members met with ServiceMaster.

That pledge was to consider internal proposals to improve the efficiency of maintenance operations before listening to outside vendors.

The CEA/NEA-affiliated Facility Managers Association got right on the case. "Acting with the other members of the Denver Public Schools coalition of employee unions, we showed the board what we do and explained how past job and staff cuts affect our ability to do it," says FMA President Ruby Hernandez.

The coalition was successful, at least in the short run. Hernandez says the ServiceMaster proposal has been shelved for the coming school year.

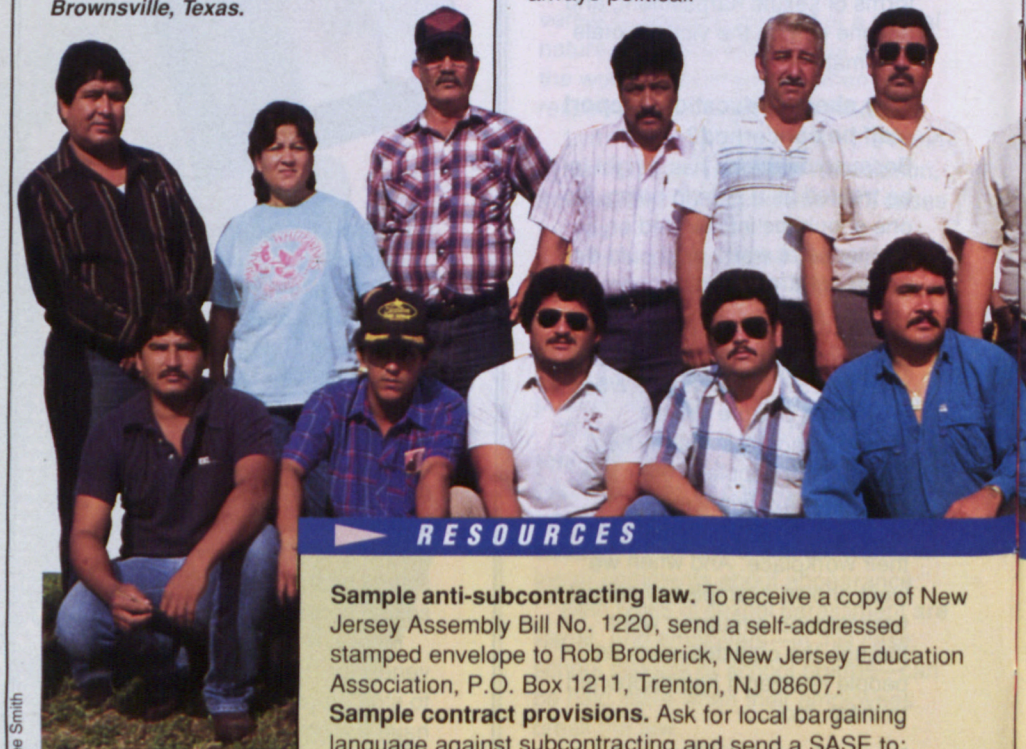
► Two years ago Louisiana's St. John Association of Educators "stopped ServiceMaster cold," says SJAE's President, parapro Iona Holloway. But the total victory was short-lived.

Today the management of maintenance and groundskeeping in St. John's Parish schools is in the hands of ServiceMaster. But the employees are not with ServiceMaster: they're still with the parish.

"Saving the staff jobs is a bittersweet victory," says Holloway, "because the price was the management contract."

What advice to others to keep the subcontractor away? "Be politically involved," says Holloway, "because school board decision making is always political."

These transportation workers drove Durham Transportation out of Brownsville, Texas.



Bruce Lee Smith

RESOURCES

Sample anti-subcontracting law. To receive a copy of New Jersey Assembly Bill No. 1220, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to Rob Broderick, New Jersey Education Association, P.O. Box 1211, Trenton, NJ 08607.

Sample contract provisions. Ask for local bargaining language against subcontracting and send a SASE to:

► Agnes Ramirez, Educational Support Personnel of

'Contracting In': Year II

Mark Piscotty

In 1991 the food service workers in Muskegon, Michigan's Reeths-Puffer school district beat out two outside firms—and won the contract to provide food service to the district's 2,000 students.

This year the 22 food service workers—all members of the Reeths-Puffer Education Support Personnel Association—were awarded the contract again. Crew chief Sue Wiggers (left) explains why.

How good have you been at delivering the goods?
Our food service program operated in the black—which has never happened before. And all the money stays in the district. The kids enjoy what we offer, and our catering program is being used more than ever.

How did you know what to do?
There's been a lot of learning on the job—about budget, staffing, federal and state reporting requirements. In addition, some of us had already gotten certification in food service management.

Have your jobs changed?
A lot. People used to look to the head person for answers to questions. Now they must make decisions themselves, take initiatives. We've become responsible, decision-making people.

What's new for this year?
We'll expand the program. We'll offer early elementary nutritional education to kids and parents during the day, then have the county extension agent come in the evening to help low-income parents with menu selection and food preparation.

Can other support members follow your example?
Sure, but you can't sit back. You have to gain credibility with the district administration, your colleagues in the teachers union, and the school board. No one will hand you an opportunity; you have to show you're ready to take the lead.

Oakland, 272 E. 12th St., Suite C, Oakland, CA 94606.

► Frank Martin, Arkansas Education Association, 1500 W. 4th St., Little Rock, AR 72201. Ask for the provision bargained by the Little Rock Classroom Teachers Association.

► Michael A. Stephens, Michigan Education Association, 3100 29th St., S.E., Kentwood, MI 49512.

Jeff Mitchell

Little Rock Association members, from left: James Adams, Mike Campbell, Charlcie Gibbs, Willie Givens, and Theretha Jackson. Behind them, Eleanor Coleman (left) and Gwendolyn Porter-Cole.

All for One in Little Rock

Forget paranoia. When they're *really* out to get you, you've got to stick together.

That's the lesson four groups of school employees—custodians, teacher aides, bus drivers, and teachers—are learning in Little Rock, Arkansas, as they battle a school board out to bust their union.

The union—the Little Rock Classroom Teachers Association—has represented teachers for a long time and support members since 1984.

Since then, it's been a rocky road to maintain recognition and dignity. "The Little Rock school board would like to see us return to a weakened 'meet and confer' agreement," says custodian Willie Givens, ESP chair.

But it doesn't look as if the board's going to win that fight. Last fall, the board failed in an attempt to unilaterally decertify LRCTA. And early this spring, support workers overwhelmingly rebuffed a school board attempt to take away their bargaining rights.

Now the fight's about board proposals to contract out union work. As before, teachers are pitching in. LRCTA President Eleanor Coleman, a school counselor, says teachers presented materials at school board meetings to show that contracting out would cost more money than the current system.

For now, the district has agreed to postpone any contracting out pending the results of a study, due next year.

And Little Rock school employees are continuing to work together toward their primary objective—creating the best possible educational opportunities for students in their schools.

For example, Coleman says, bus drivers are playing an important role in her own school counseling work. "Drivers notice all kinds of things that help us help the kids. When we're all one group, that's how it works."

Across the country, thousands of school employees are banding together to achieve their goals. A few examples:

► In Delaware, mutual support between custodian- and teacher-members of the Milford Education Association has led to successful contracts for each.

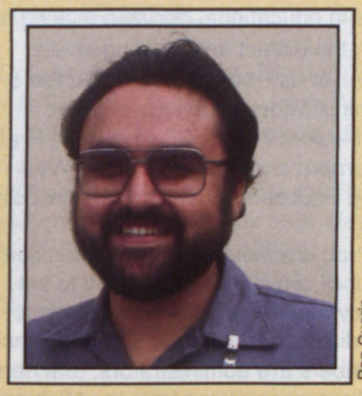
During 16 months of bargaining and, later, fact-finding, custodians and teachers stood together in demonstration after demonstration. Finally both got what they wanted: the contractual right to take grievances to arbitration.

► In the Central Kitsap, Washington, district, support employees are working with kids who have behavioral and adjustment problems.

For example, technical support specialist Jeff Swanberg takes at-risk students under his wing and teaches them minor computer repair.

"When our support workers go into the classroom," says Central Kitsap Classified Employees Association President Lu Bergstrom, "it brings the ratio of students to teachers down to 15 to one."

One Family, One Contract



Ron Guerin

Maintenance worker Lalo Garcia (above)—a member of NEA-Las Cruces and part-time ESP organizer for NEA-New Mexico—explains how the state's new collective bargaining law can work to bring school employees together.

How will this law affect school employees in New Mexico?
Finally, we'll have bargaining rights. To support our efforts to get good contracts, NEA-New Mexico has launched a campaign to organize and unify school employees in each district into wall-to-wall bargaining units.

How would that work?
Ideally, there would be one contract covering certified personnel and support workers. It makes no sense to split our local strength when it comes time to bargain.

What are the benefits of having one master contract?
Rival organizations trying to woo support workers away from the Association family often play one classification of membership against the other. For example, they attempt to build a wedge between the teachers and support employees by telling us our benefits will be cut to give teachers a bigger piece of the pie.

But these other organizations seeking to represent school support workers can offer little more than negotiating experience. They lack expertise in school matters, and don't understand, for example, the importance of support employees having due process rights—an NEA priority—or million dollar liability insurance—an NEA benefit.

Administrators stir up friction between teachers and us by offering one of our groups more than the other. One contract for all—giving everyone the same benefits and increases—would solve those problems.

How can a joint contract deal with job differences?
Of course, a master contract would contain provisions addressing specific job classifications, too.

Are there other benefits to having wall-to-wall locals?
School employees work together as a team, so it doesn't make sense for us to be split up. NEA-NM's slogan is "We Teach the Children." And we all do.

RESOURCES

Tips for Support Worker-Teacher Cooperation

These tips come from Marie Evans, a paraprofessional in Washington's Bainbridge Island district and president of her local UniServ Council. Evans has organized Association workshops on ESP-teacher collaboration.

► Talk to all the people you work with, not just support staff friends.

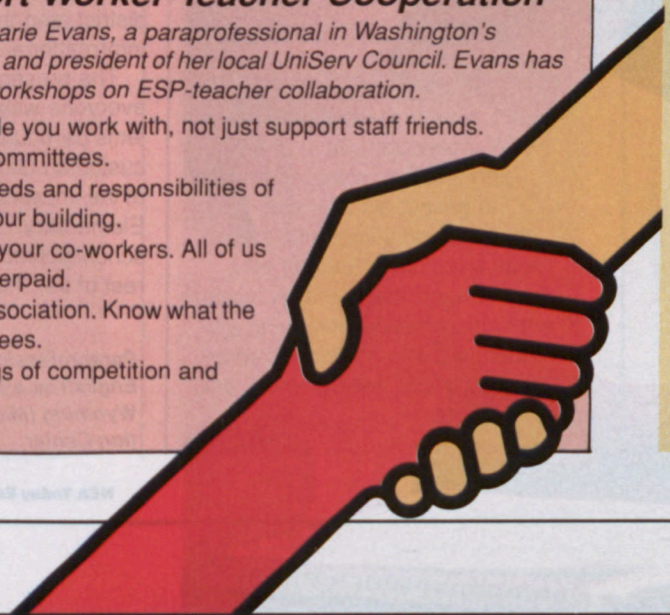
► Offer to serve on committees.

► Get to know the needs and responsibilities of people in other jobs in your building.

► Do a little extra for your co-workers. All of us are overworked and underpaid.

► Get active in the Association. Know what the issues are for all employees.

► Put aside all feelings of competition and distrust.



Michigan Support Workers Staff School Improvement Teams

Education reform, site-based decision making, participatory management—these phrases too often refer only to the efforts of teachers and administrators to change America's schools.

Not so in Wyoming, Michigan. In this rural district of 215 ESP and 450 teachers, support staff are equal partners in educational decision making at both the district and building levels.

"All of us—school board members, administrators, teachers, support staff—work in unison," says Rose Pratt, a parapro and president of the Wyoming Education Support Staff Association.

Pratt is a member of the Professional Council, which meets monthly to set policy and make budget decisions for the district's 11 schools. Other Council members are administrators, teachers, and representatives from the Michigan and Wyoming Education Associations.

"What any school employee does often affects all of us," says Pratt. One example: the school calendar.

Until recently, Wyoming's school district calendar included up to 10 half-days for teacher conferences and in-service. But teachers didn't realize that each of those half-days meant a half-day's wages lost to food service workers.

When it was brought to teachers' attention, they worked to change the system. They reduced the number of half-days on the calendar, and helped food service workers get paid for special duties and inservice sessions.

Now, teachers, administrators, and support staff develop the school calendar together, says Pratt.

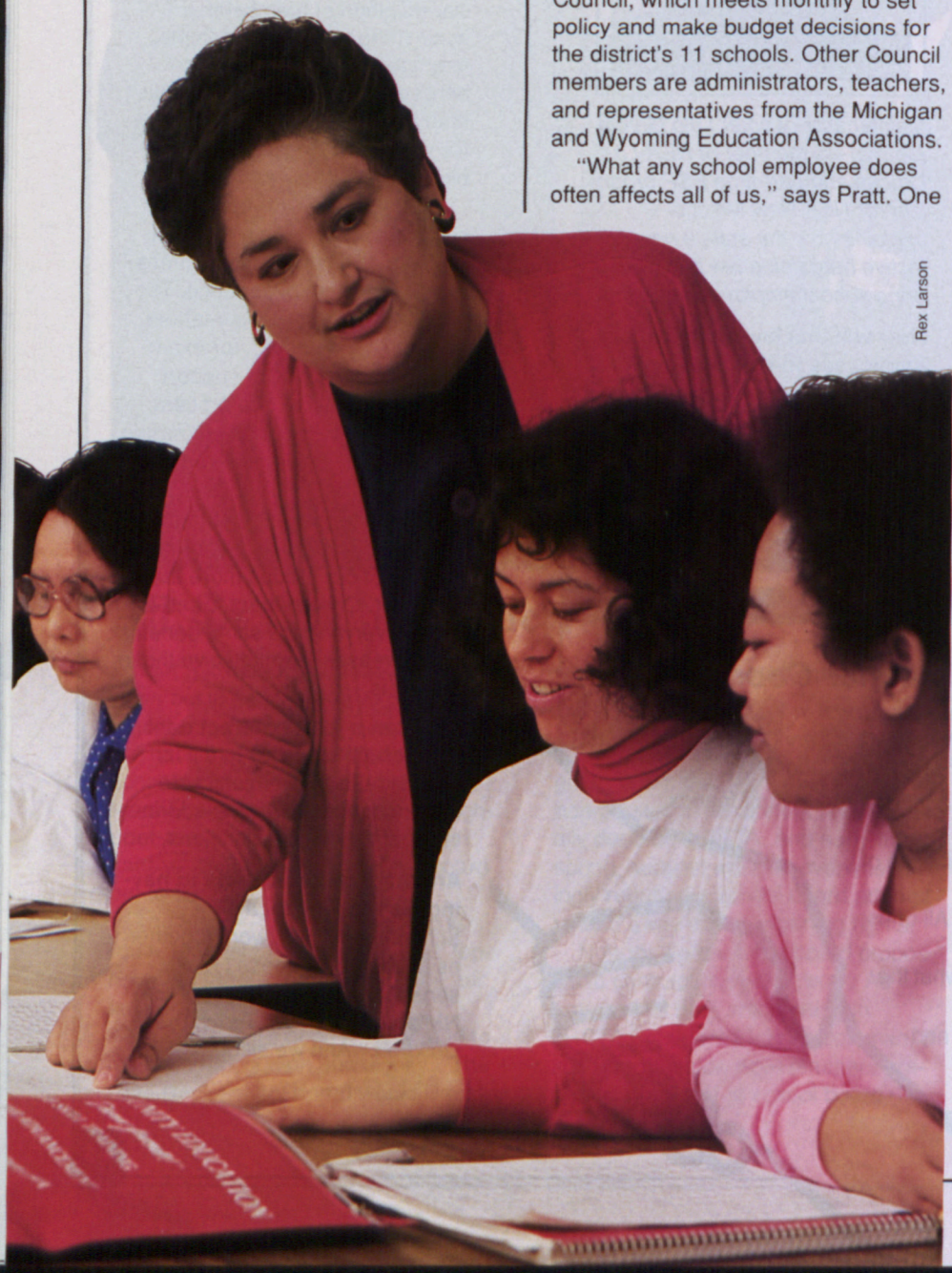
Pratt credits WEA with helping to encourage support workers to get involved in school and education issues. It was, in fact, teacher professional development funds that paid for workshops that trained support staff—as well as teachers—to work as members of school improvement teams.

Staff who complete this training pass on what they've learned to other staff in their buildings, who then form teams that plan and work out strategy for school improvement. Support workers co-chair many of these teams with teacher colleagues.

Each school improvement team is comprised of volunteer teachers, support staff, and one administrator.

Each month, all the school improvement teams, plus Pratt and teacher representatives, meet at a different school. At these meetings, participants discuss concerns that affect the whole district, and the host school gives an informational presentation about itself.

The presentations better acquaint everyone with the programs and problems particular to each school, notes custodian Gary Vanderveen, a member of the improvement team at Oriole Park Elementary. "And hearing how one school solved a problem often helps the rest of us," he adds.



Rex Larson

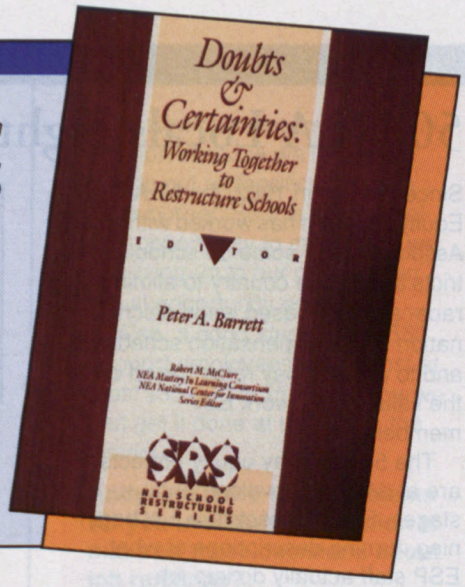
Paraprofessional Rose Pratt helps teach English as a second language at the Wyoming (Michigan) Community Education Center.

RESOURCES

▶ *Negotiating Change: Education Reform and Collective Bargaining,* NEA Research, 1992. Single copies available free. Write to NEA Research, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

▶ *Doubts and Certainties: Working Together to Restructure Schools,* Peter A. Barrett, 1991. Order No. 1843-5-00-C8, $18.95 prepaid.

Send check or money order to the NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516 (800/229-4200).



ESP and School Reform

Ann Bastian (right), senior policy officer with the New World Foundation, is an author on education policy issues and a frequent consultant to NEA affiliates on education reform issues.

Why is it important for school support workers to be involved in education reform?
If you, as a support employee, care about public schools, your job, and having a good place to work, then you have to be concerned about education reform.

You need to be part of any site- or school-based management. Just think of all the things at school that directly affect you: student discipline, choosing between adding a classroom aide or buying a computer, and more.

There are exciting opportunities here. And there are some big threats to public education you'll need to fight, too.

What kind of threats?
First, funding inequities. School districts with solid property tax bases are spending five, even 10 times as much per pupil as those in poorer districts. We need to get politicians to even the playing field by getting more money to the poorer districts, not less to the

Andrea DiLorenzo

ones that are doing well.

Second, privatization is a big threat to public education. When a district contracts out certain ESP services, the feeling of school community breaks down.

Like teachers, you must think about what it would mean to work in a privatized system without the same bargaining clout, without the ability to seek public support on job issues.

Beyond the larger battles, what's our role in making the schools where we work better?
You need to become part of the programs themselves. For example, food service workers should be involved in classes on nutrition. Maintenance staff should be involved in environmental issues.

But perhaps most important of all, most of you live in the communities where you work, which gives you a neighborhood credibility that many teachers don't have. You have a unique opportunity to be a bridge between teachers and residents, to talk to your neighbors about what's right and wrong with schools.

You can also help teachers better understand where kids in your community are coming from. If yours is a multicultural community, you can be a cultural resource.

Think back to your own school days. Who comes to mind first? Most likely, it's a support worker—perhaps a bus driver or secretary. Recognize your own importance. It's time to get involved in your school's business.

WHAT WE WANT

50 NEA Locals Fight for Fair Pay

Since its start in 1982, the NEA Pay Equity Program has worked with local Associations in some 50 school districts across the country to eliminate race- and sex-based wage discrimination from compensation schedules and to achieve pay rates based on the value of the work ESP members do.

The 50 NEA pay equity projects are at different developmental stages. Some projects are just beginning, turning descriptions of what ESP staff actually do into job descriptions that can be coded and reclassified fairly.

Other NEA local affiliates involved in pay equity projects have already bargained thereclassifications—and accompanying pay increases—into their contracts.

But the economy has put implementation of some pay equity projects on hold. "The extra money that districts must set aside to bring people up to their new classification levels just hasn't been there," explains Pam Ryan, manager of the NEA Pay Equity Progam.

"But we've been doing the preparatory work. When the economy improves, our members will be ready."

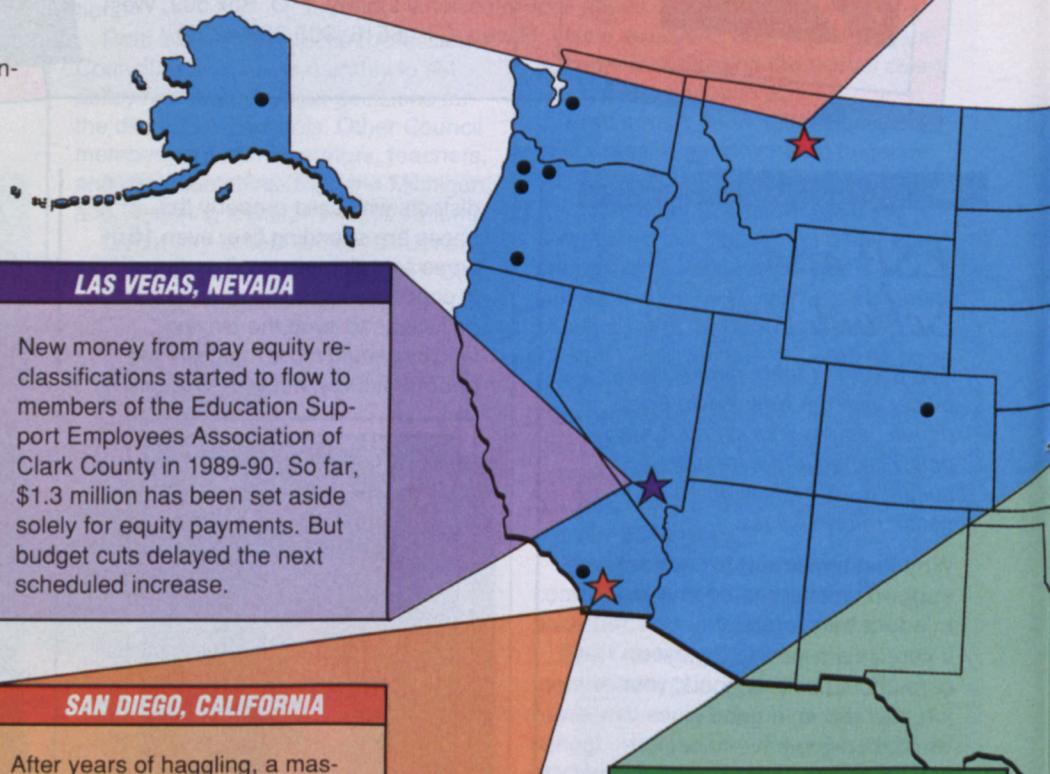
RESOURCES

Get two free information packets—"What Is Pay Equity?" and "Job Description Do's and Don'ts"—by writing to Roger Stephon, NEA Human and Civil Rights, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

If your local Association is interested in pursuing a pay equity project, please contact your state Association or regional office.

GREAT FALLS, MONTANA

Education support employees in traditionally "female" jobs in Great Falls average $5.80 an hour, while those in "male" job categories average $8.60 an hour. A factfinder calls that discrimination; the school board disagrees. The Great Falls ESP Association is pushing for fair classifications—and fair pay rates.



LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

New money from pay equity reclassifications started to flow to members of the Education Support Employees Association of Clark County in 1989-90. So far, $1.3 million has been set aside solely for equity payments. But budget cuts delayed the next scheduled increase.

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

After years of haggling, a massive reclassification of 328 job descriptions involving 10,000 support workers is nearly completed. Some of the most undervalued jobs—secretaries, instructional aides, and food service workers—could move up as many as four salary steps. Next task: to negotiate the new rankings into the salary schedule.

"Our contract requires us to use the results of the job classification study to present a classification system free of gender and race bias to the board of education by next January," says San Diego Classified Employees activist Cheryl Wasserbauer.

WATERLOO, IOWA

The secretaries, aides, and clerical staff who belong to Waterloo Educational Support Personnel have just begun an NEA pay equity project. But their payoff won't be immediate. An instructional levy failed last fall, and money's tight.

This year, as administrative secretary Jeanne Kemp points out, "We're laying the groundwork for real pay equity when the economy turns around."

Two Roads Converge

Andy Fain, coordinator of personnel for Dothan City (Alabama) schools and a Dothan Education Association member, and Carolyn Mathews, president of the Dothan City ESP Organization, are equally enthusiastic supporters of the NEA pay equity plan begun there last year.

What do you each want to accomplish?

Mathews: The Association wants fair and equitable pay scales. It's been more than 15 years since our job descriptions were redone. We feel some of the pay scales are inequitable. We applied for the NEA program to remedy that.

Fain: The NEA pay equity plan is an attractive idea for the administration because we've always had to put reclassification on a back burner. So this is an excellent opportunity to make sure we are living up to our creed as an equal opportunity employer.

Also, a good study of our 550 support employees would cost at least $35,000 to $50,000. Now we can get it done at no cost to the district.

Andy, are there trust problems for you in allowing the union to make all these decisions about job rankings?

Fain: No, the project's a joint effort of the administration and the union. We'll be involved every step of the way.

Mathews: There's a joint committee, and the superintendent is behind us 100 percent.

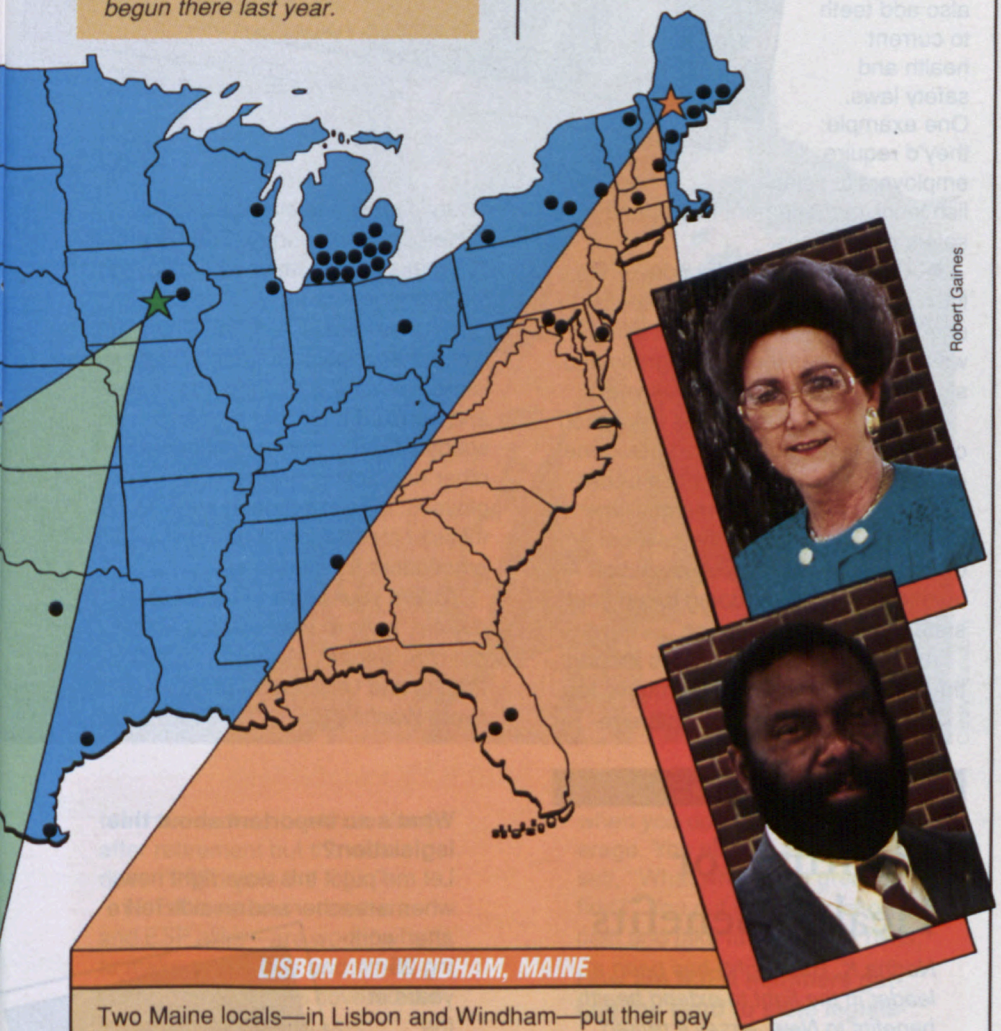
Fain: I don't anticipate this will be an adversarial relationship.

But are you willing to use the NEA findings and apply them to your salary schedule?

Fain: We'll have to study the findings. Any decision is ultimately up to the superintendent and the board. It would be presumptuous of me to say that we'll take whatever there is and implement it. We have to look at the results from the standpoint of economic possibility, of educational feasibility, and of political possibility—what's palatable to the community.

Mathews: But I want to stress how closely we are working together on this.

Fain: I feel very positive that the NEA is taking the time to do a thorough study and analysis. This program will take up to three years to complete. We want the job to be done right, so we'll come up with a product that we can take seriously.



Robert Gaines

LISBON AND WINDHAM, MAINE

Two Maine locals—in Lisbon and Windham—put their pay equity results on the bargaining table this spring. "As far as negotiating equity payments, the economy's probably our biggest problem," says UniServ director Jonathan Falk. "Also, one of our districts, Lisbon, has lost a lot of state aid, so realistically we're talking phase-ins—getting our foot in the door this time."

WHAT WE WANT

NEA Member Lobbyists: Making Democracy Work

Carolyn Salisbury

What's Delaware paraprofessional Delema Lott doing on Capitol Hill?

"Taking a message to our legislators that their decisions on health care, education funding, and safe schools not only affect a budget, they affect lives," she says.

Several times a year, Lott—and hundreds of other NEA members who make up the Association's Congressional Contact Teams—travel to Washington to take their case directly to those elected to represent them.

"When students can't concentrate because they don't have enough to eat, they'll never learn," says Lott, who oversees in-school suspensions at Cape Henlopen High School. "Political speeches won't help—political action will."

Lott's actions make for effective lobbying, says Pat Dix, an NEA Government Relations lobbyist. "When members of Congress know their constituents feel strongly about a bill, they're going to think twice about opposing it," says Dix.

Issues that affect education employees are being debated all the time. A few examples:

► NEA is leading the Campaign for New Priorities, a nationwide coalition effort to shift government funding away from defense and back to education, health care, and other domestic programs. The Campaign has established a toll-free number, 800/92ACTION, that citizens can call to generate letters to Congress.

► The Higher Education Amendments of 1992 (Senate Bill 1150) focus on student financial aid but include a $50 million program to train paraprofessionals to become licensed teachers.

► The Comprehensive Occupational Safety and Health Reform Act (H.R. 3160, S. 1622) would expand the scope of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to cover public employees. The bills would also add teeth to current health and safety laws. One example: they'd require employers to establish labor-management health and safety committees.

► One bill of particular concern to NEA support members—the federal unemployment compensation bill—was recently passed by Congress and signed by President Bush this year.

This new law gives states the option of making education support personnel eligible for unemployment compensation during the summer months when they're not working for their school districts. Ask your state Association leaders what they're doing to get your state to take up that option.

Actions in state legislatures around the nation affect support members, too.

► Vermont's state legislature recently passed the strongest family leave bill in the country. The bill grants 12 weeks unpaid leave to employees for dependent care.

► Under pressure from Illinois Education Association members, state legislators overrode the governor's veto and adopted a bill that prohibits schools from requiring teachers or other non-administrative school employees, except school nurses, to administer medication or perform medical procedures for students.

To add your voice to the national debate, write to your elected leaders c/o U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510, and U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515.

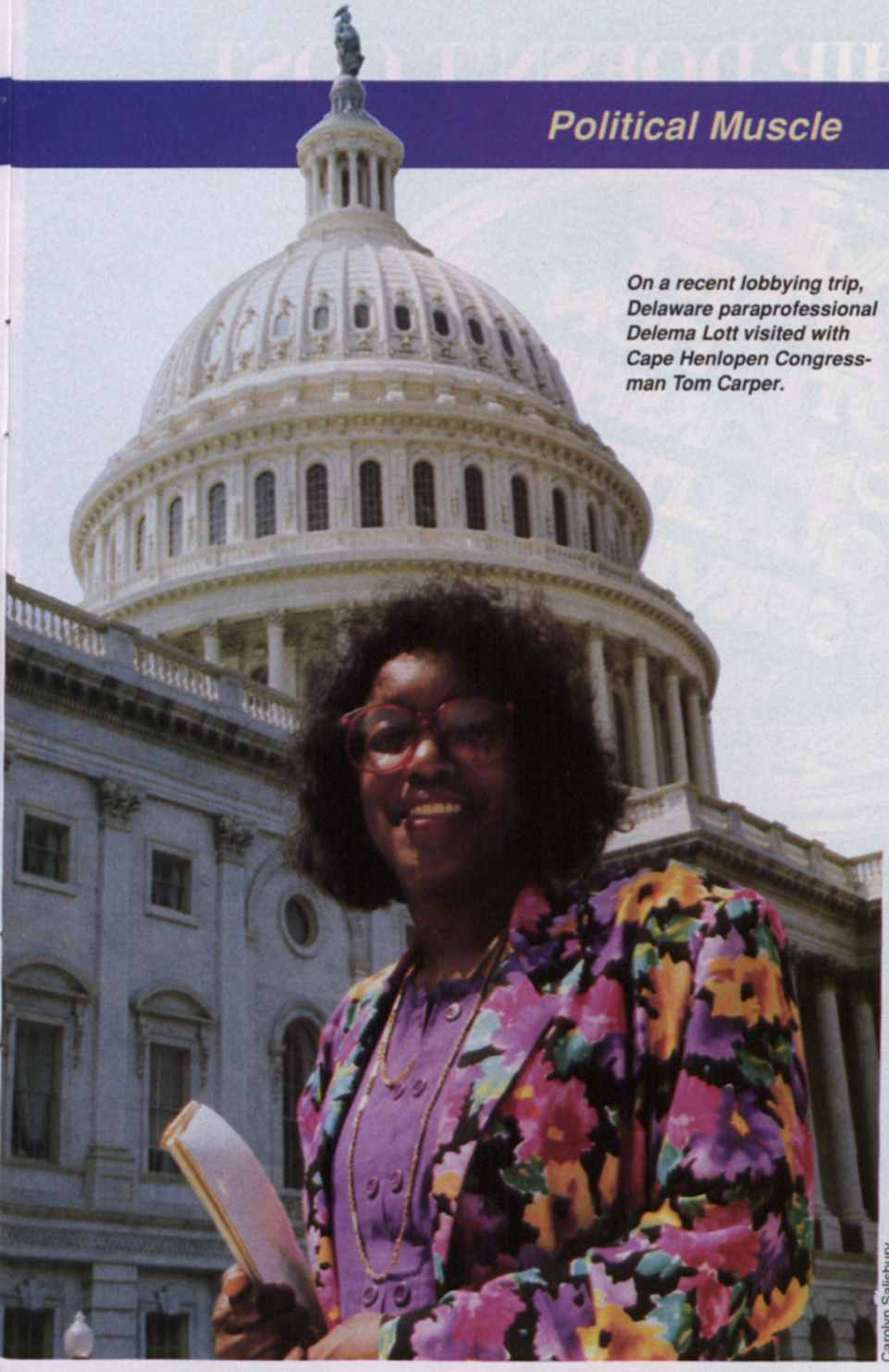
Fighting for Health Benefits

Norma K. Ray (right) has been a leader in the fight to extend health benefits to New Jersey's retired education support personnel. A paraprofessional in Paterson, Ray's also a member of the NEA Board of Directors.

What's so important about this legislation?

Let me put it this way: right now, when a teacher and an aide retire after working 25 years in the same classroom, the

Joe Di Dio



Carolyn Salisbury

On a recent lobbying trip, Delaware paraprofessional Delema Lott visited with Cape Henlopen Congressman Tom Carper.

teacher receives health coverage after retirement but the aide doesn't. Where's the logic?

NJEA members—teachers and ESP alike—are working hard to make sure aides and other support workers are covered during their retirement years.

What's happening to retired ESP members without this coverage?

Well, you don't have much choice when you don't have health coverage. You end up asking yourself, "What wheel do I grease first?" You put up with a lot of pain and take far too many risks.

How are NJEA members getting the word to state legislators?

By using every means possible. We conducted a statewide letter-writing campaign, we've spoken directly to legislators, we've talked to the media, we've held rallies at the capitol.

What's the status of the bill right now?

The bill's currently pending in the New Jersey House and Senate, and we've heard from legislators who say it's expected to pass. But we're not content to sit back. We're continuing to lobby. We plan to keep the pressure on until this bill becomes law.

RESOURCES

Are you ready to flex your political muscle? Here are some tried and true tips from political activists around the country.

- ► Mobilize your members. Strength in numbers is the key, whether it's turning out for rallies or organizing voter drives.
- ► Elect real "education" leaders. Elect leaders who will fight for quality education.
- ► Rally round the issue. In East Brunswick, New Jersey, a well-publicized rally supporting the school budget raised community awareness. The result: voters turned out in greater numbers and passed the budget.
- ► Keep your representative's feet to the fire. Make sure those campaign promises weren't empty ones.
- ► Stand out in the crowd. Wear your local Association's T-shirt, buttons, or cap. Keep your Association's name in the news.
- ► Join coalitions. If you can join forces with other organizations, your voice is magnified.
- ► Lobby, lobby, lobby. Keep sending the message that political decisions affect your life and the lives of the students you care about.
- ► Run for office yourself.

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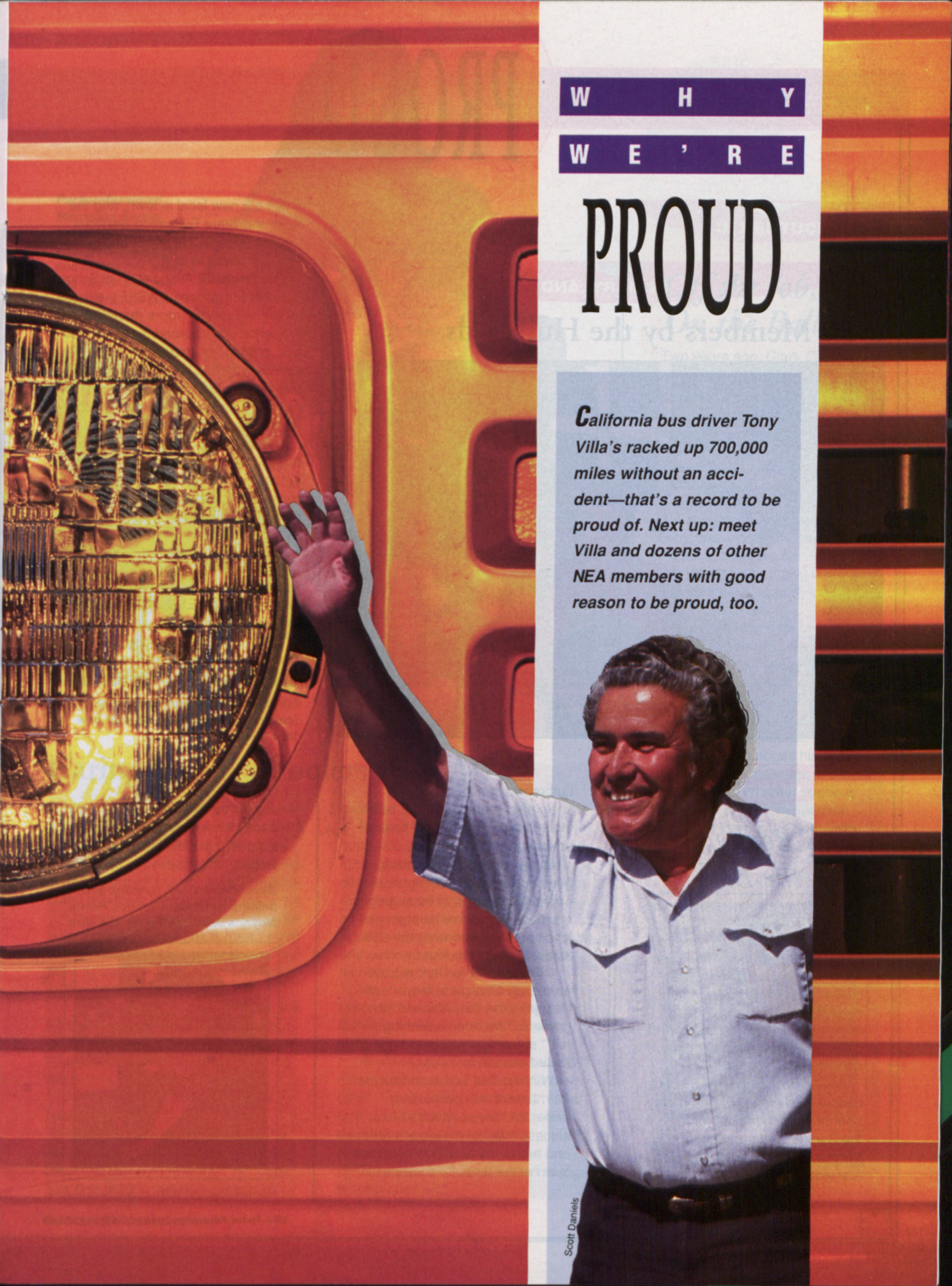
California bus driver Tony Villa's racked up 700,000 miles without an accident—that's a record to be proud of. Next up: meet Villa and dozens of other NEA members with good reason to be proud, too.



Scott Daniels

WHY WE'RE PROUD

IN MARYLAND

New Members by the Hundreds

Bill Green

There's a new local in town, and the Maryland State Education Services Council (MSESC) is larger and stronger because of it.

The Frederick Association of School Support Employees (FASSE), already an organization of more than 700 Frederick County secretaries, custodians, bus drivers, parapros, and food service workers, voted in February to affiliate with MSESC/NEA. By late April, 150 more workers had joined the union, raising membership to 850.

"We felt it was time to work with an Association that would fight for our rights," says FASSE President Carol Hawthorne, a secretary at Lingonmeyer High School. "Adding our members to the 6,000 that already belong to MSESC can only increase our clout."

With MSESC's help, FASSE is pressing for collective bargaining rights—with MSESC/NEA as the exclusive bargaining agent.

"By working together for safe workplaces, pay equity, and health care, we'll all benefit," adds Hawthorne.

Local President Carol Hawthorne (center) surrounds herself with new NEA members.

IN INDIANA

She's Really 'On the Ball'

Penny Meyer's got no shortage of nontraditional hats.

By day, she's a bus driver and an activist in her local—the East Allen County Bus Drivers Association. Before and after school, she runs a thousand-acre farm with her two brothers, raising beef cattle and growing corn, beans, and wheat.

And, in her spare time, Meyer's deeply involved in the day-to-day operations of her alma mater—the Central Lutheran School in Ft. Wayne. Not only is she one of the first women elected to Central Lutheran's school board, but she's also spent five years building a championship girls' basketball program there.

As a school board member, Meyer's involved in hiring teachers and principals, in managing maintenance and renovation projects, and in overseeing the 250-student school's budget.

As coach of the Central Lutheran Lady Chargers, Meyer's in charge of the 6th, 7th, and 8th graders. "We're on a winning roll," she notes, citing an undefeated season last year.

Winning that Lutheran League tournament was particularly sweet for Meyer, who had four nieces—"two of my sister's girls and two of my brother's"—on the team at the time. This year's record: 23-1.

Why continue at such a hectic pace? Meyer's explanation is simple: "I guess I like challenges," she says.

Beyond coaching, farming, and helping run a local school, Penny Meyer's been driving for 13 years.

Dean Musser

Jim Decker

Paraprofessional Mercedes Barela helps special needs youngsters both on and off the job. Here, she works with preschoolers at a Las Vegas school.

IN NEVADA

Caring for Preschoolers with AIDS

A few dozen Clark County youngsters with AIDS and those who test positive for HIV will soon have their own preschool day care-learning center, thanks in part to the efforts of Nevada instructional assistant Mercedes Barela.

"These kids aren't accepted at regular preschools," explains Barela. "Here they won't stand out just because they have to take medication or have tubes in their bodies."

For the past three years, Barela and a handful of other people have been working to set up the center, which will open later this year to 15 or 20 youngsters.

Barela says she does "whatever needs to be done."

But Diana Dowling, principal of the John F. Miller School for Special Education, where Barela works, wonders how one person can do so much so quickly.

According to Dowling, Barela wrote hundreds of letters to businesses and other groups to raise funds for the center, single-handedly and overnight rounded up 100 collection canisters—all bearing a printed logo she designed—to place in local supermarkets, and planned and coordinated a community open house at the center.

After 15 years of working daily with severely handicapped preschoolers, Barela says it's important that folks accept kids as they are.

"An illness or disability doesn't really make one youngster different from any other," says Barela. "It doesn't matter how a child functions. All children will bloom if you give them confidence and encouragement.

"The bottom line is, we need to care for one another."

IN KENTUCKY

Off the Job, On the Ballot

Two years ago, Clark County school supply distributor Kenny Fankell helped school employees organize for better working conditions, health care, and pay. Now he's getting his entire community organized for a different purpose.

Fankell, president of Clark County KESPA (Kentucky Education Support Personnel Association), has entered the race for the Kentucky state legislature. A Democrat, he's running an underdog campaign against a longtime incumbent.

"I've talked to a lot of people around this county, and they're hurting," adds Fankell. "They need jobs and health care, and they want a say in what happens to them. I just want to bring their message to the capitol."

Fankell also hopes his campaign sends a message to school employees. "Whether you're a custodian or an administrator, you have the right to be heard and the right to be elected."

John Flavell

School distributor Kenny Fankell takes his organizing skills into the political arena.

WHY WE'RE PROUD

IN DELAWARE

Member of the Year Leads by Example

Bus driver Peggy Bertollo has earned a reputation among Association members nationwide as a fighter for the rights of school employees.

That reputation was recognized and rewarded last spring when Bertollo received the first annual NEA Education Support Personnel Award at the ESP conference in Seattle.

In presenting the award, NEA President Keith Geiger called Bertollo "an organizer, political activist, Association leader, and an inspiration to all of us."

For more than 10 years, Bertollo's been pushing for change. Years ago, when bus drivers in Newcastle's Colonial School District faced harsh working conditions and minuscule raises, Bertollo said there was only one solution—to organize. As a result, Delaware's first ESP local was born.

"Without Peggy, we simply would not exist," says Colonial Transportation Association President Sandy Dwyer. "There was a time when our raises amounted to ten cents if we were lucky, our benefits were poor, and morale was low. We had no control over our assignments or our working conditions.

"With her leadership, we organized ourselves and stood up for our rights," continues Dwyer. "She's responsible for our existence as an organization and our rights as school employees."

In that same spirit, Bertollo says the award recognizes the commitment all NEA members can—and should—bring to their Association work.

"You have to understand," she said in accepting the award, "that when you're out there organizing, you're making the world better not just for yourself but for every worker who follows in your footsteps, every child who gets on a bus, steps into a classroom, or enters your cafeteria."

Gary Emeigh

Award winner Peggy Bertollo says her commitment to the Association "means a lot of hard work sometimes, but it's worth it."

J. P. Schaffner

IN ALABAMA

Instruction: Nature's Way

When it comes to her worksite, school secretary Doris Dortch is one happy camper.

She works at Mobile's Environmental Studies Center—a 640-acre habitat replete with woodlands, nature trails, and a 20-acre lake. Center staffers provide lessons and coordinate field trips for students from the district's 90 schools.

"It's great that Mobile's kids—particularly inner-city students—get the opportunity to commune with nature," Dortch says.

The program began in 1974 with a start-up federal grant. In 1978, the school district assumed funding of the $300,000-a-year program. Now some 30,000 students visit annually.

As a place to work, the Center's got its benefits, too. "There's a path around the lake that's particularly beautiful," Dortch says. "It's a nice place to unwind from the pressures of the day."

Secretary Doris Dortch is president of both the Mobile County ESPO and the state Association's ESP division.

IN ARIZONA

Producing the News—on Screen

Laura McIntyre, computer aide at the Esperanza Elementary School in Tucson, won the Arizona Education Association's 1992 ESPecially for Kids Award for the newspaper she puts out with at-risk fourth and fifth graders at her school.

About a dozen kids each semester write for the paper during their twice-a-week after-school tutoring period. Technically, they're in a Chapter 1 tutoring program.

"When they first come, they're hesitant to write things down," McIntyre explains. "They're not sure what to put down or how to spell it."

But the computer changes all that. "I stand there at the screen beside them, saying 'I still don't understand,' and they keep doing it over," McIntyre explains. "Making corrections on the spot seems less tedious than having them rewrite on paper and see red marks."

Edward McCain

Computer aide Laura McIntyre works one-on-one with fourth grader Carlos Molina to help improve his writing skills.

Is the semester on the *Esperanza Eagle News* a good educational experience for the kids? McIntyre thinks so. "Their interest level and enthusiasm are higher, their output has increased, and the blank sheet is no longer staring them in the face."

IN WYOMING

Brave New World

"This has been our year for learning," says Hannah Shannon, president of the Sheridan Central ESP Association. A year for training and preparation—in case the school board has something like negotiations in mind.

A brand new local, SCESPA is trying to flourish in a state where support personnel don't have due process rights, only two support locals negotiate contracts, and state revenues have been ravaged by tough times.

Sheridan support employees began to think "union" when the school board lowered the base salary for all ESP occupations.

"The board knocked the top steps off the salary schedule," explains SCESPA's founding president, assistant cook Betty French. "After that," she recalls, "membership bloomed."

A hint of the future direction of SCESPA-board relations will come this year when SCESPA presents proposals on hires, transfers, and seniority. Or next year, when the local hopes to put the subject of money on the table.

Robert Waggener

Sheridan ESPs, from left: Hannah Shannon, Karen Livingston, Kay King, Pat Bohn, Bel Cicci, Betty French, and Ruth Dilley.

WHY WE'RE PROUD

IN OREGON

'Energize For Action'

Teachers have a full day of in-service workshops. Why can't support employees? They can—and, last fall, members of the two-year-old Salem-Keizer Association of Classified Employees (SKACE) did.

With help from many of its 1,100 members, the Oregon Education Association affiliate sponsored a statewide in-service day for 325 education support workers. The program—Energize for Action—was open to all support employees for a nominal fee.

Conducting the sessions—held at a local high school—were staff from the Oregon Education Association, faculty from a local community college, and area professionals.

Participants chose from a selection of 16 workshops on such diverse topics as health and safety, communications, self-image, child abuse, and living wills.

"I think the sessions were very useful," says maintenance worker Joe Viegas, "especially the ones on how to get along with people and how to channel all day-to-day experiences into higher productivity on the job."

SKACE is planning another in-service day for next year, reports paraprofessional and local President Charlotte Nielsen, and is thinking of making the day an annual event.

Jill Cannefax

Planning next year's in-service day are, left to right, standing: Vickie Viegas, Lois Stark, Connie West; sitting, Charlotte Nielsen, Joe Viegas, and Janet McIntire.

Bob Moore

IN ILLINOIS

Advocate for Indian Rights

Connie Sutter wants people to stop and think for a minute—about the Redskins, the Atlanta Braves and their tomahawk chop—about all school sports teams using Indians as mascots.

"When banners read 'Scalp the Indians' and 'Massacre the Tribe,' they hurt children and damage their self-esteem," says the Mascoutah paraprofessional.

"Indian children are forced to see it and hear it and endure it. You may leave your high school mascot behind, but they won't."

Part Cherokee Indian herself, Sutter's been an advocate for Native American rights since high school, when she campaigned for hunting and fishing rights for residents of the Colville Indian Reservation.

Now she's busy writing letters and making phone calls to school officials and legislators. Recent topics of concern: health care, equal education opportunities, and sports team names.

Para Connie Sutter wants action "even if only one person is offended."

IN OHIO

Delicious Curriculum

Once a month, NEA members Beverly Smith, Beverly Hoover, and Nancy Stover do more than simply prepare meals for Xenia students. They cook up a cultural experience.

As part of the district's effort to promote multicultural learning and awareness, Xenia cafeterias now offer meals with a classroom connection. As the students read about Chinese and Chinese-American cultures, for example, they can sample stir-fry vegetables and chicken chow mein in the cafeteria.

"Any way we can link this cafeteria with learning is terrific," says Smith, a cafeteria manager at Warner Junior High School.

During Black History Month, says Smith, lunchtime discussions turned to the menu of collard greens and barbecued ribs. "Our African-American students were so proud to have their heritage celebrated."

Cafeteria staff also learned something new, adds Hoover. "We discovered many different ways to prepare the same food—and we realized the cafeteria is another place for learning."

Michael Heinz

Cafeteria workers, from left, Beverly Hoover, Nancy Stover, and Beverly Smith are pleased to add the foods of many cultures to their menu.

IN VERMONT

On the Road

Parapro Janice Sicard isn't one to sit waiting for someone else to get the job done. Seven years ago, when she started work assisting a special education student, the Orleans Central Supervisory Union Support Staff was just getting organized.

The unit represented 35 school employees in three northern Vermont towns. Sicard helped bargain their first contract.

"The school boards never took us seriously until we organized," she recalls. "They thought they could just get people off the street to take our places, that we were a dime a dozen. 'You're just here,' they said, 'because you're bored housewives.'"

That first agreement took about 18 months to negotiate. Soon after, Sicard got talking with a friend who worked in a school in nearby Barton.

The friend noted "some discrepancies," says Sicard, "that I didn't think were quite fair."

To Sicard, the solution was obvious. She organized the Barton support staff—food service, custodians, secretaries, and aides. Then, along with Barton support staffer Pat McNichols, she bargained a first contract for the 11-member local.

Today the Vermont NEA units of the Orleans Central Supervisory Union are merged in one Association that represents both support staff and teachers and bargains with six different boards. Sicard hopes the next negotiations will see a unified bargaining team meeting with all six at once.

"We do a lot of work, and we get paid little money for it. I want to make the boards recognize that we're not dime-a-dozen. I want to make sure we get what we deserve."

Mark Sasahara

Parapro Janice Sicard and student Billy Young examine two baby mallards at Lake Region High School.

WHY WE'RE PROUD

IN NEW YORK

Staying in the Swim

NEA member Marney Burns is up to her neck in hot water a lot of the time. Well—in warm water, anyway. Burns supervises the therapeutic pool at the Hewes Center, a public vocational and special education center in Chautauqua County.

A certified water safety instructor, Burns provides adaptive aquatics activities to dozens of area students from infancy through age 21.

A second job for Burns: weekly aqua therapy for community residents. She's also employed to officiate swim meets for Chautauqua and Cattaraugus counties and teach CPR and first aid.

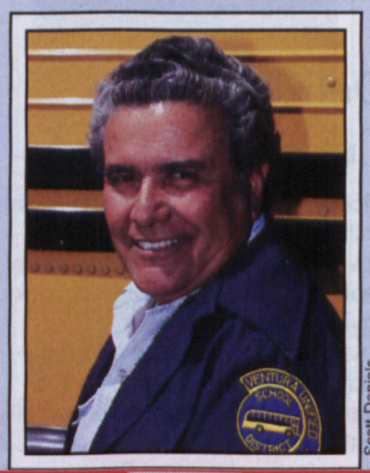
To help youngsters enjoy the water safely, Burns gives swimming lessons for children of Center staff. And she volunteers her time teaching an aquatic therapy group before school.

A schedule like that doesn't leave much spare time. What does Burns do for recreation?

"On the mornings I'm going to open the pool early," she explains, "I go over to Jamestown Community College first. I just have time for a swim in their pool."

In her spare time, paraprofessional Marney Burns leads classes of community residents through a series of low-impact exercises, also known as aqua therapy.

Mike Anderson



Scott Daniels

IN CALIFORNIA

A Bus Driver's Bus Driver

When Tony Villa retired a few months ago, the Ventura unified school district lost one of the best bus drivers in the state.

By all objective standards, Villa's record at the wheel is spectacular—700,000 miles without a chargeable accident in 34 years on the job. So noteworthy, in fact, the California Highway Patrol recently gave him a special safe driving award.

What's Villa's secret? "I waste no time in getting the kids under control," he explains. "During the first week of school, I establish rules and don't hesitate to enforce them."

Now that he's retired, Villa's looking forward to devoting more time to his favorite hobby—masonry work. Building a concrete driveway and a barbecue pit top his priority list.

"I'd like to drive a school bus part time, too," he says. Is a new safety record in the offing?

Tony Villa (above) proudly displays the patch identifying him as a Ventura school bus driver.

IN PENNSYLVANIA

Defending Her Choice

"I got involved in the PTA when my daughter started school," says school secretary Sandra Zelno. "I had a firm belief in the public school system."

Some 15 years later, in 1991, that belief made NEA member Zelno a leader of a successful fight against a state private school choice bill. As first vice-president of the state PTA, the Pittsburgh-area secretary became spokesperson for the coalition defending public education.

The bill offered parents public money to send their children to private schools. "That made parents—and the PTA—the key to defending public schools," Zelno points out.

Although the coalition was successful in defeating the private school choice bill in December, public school supporters remain vigilant. "I've seen these attempts for 15 years," says Zelno. "They're not going to go away."

Keith Srakocic

Secretary Sandra Zelno helped lead a 30-group coalition in defeating a state school choice bill.

IN LOUISIANA

Specially Creative

Hundreds of special education students in St. Mary's Parish enjoy a very special arts festival each year, thanks to NEA member Anna Cunningham and six other parapros from across the parish.

For the past five years, the seven paras have shared the many responsibilities of putting on the festival—from fundraising to entertainment to transportation. "We divide up what has to be done," explains Cunningham, who, matched by her colleagues and a district supervisor, puts hundreds of hours into the festival each year.

Each child earns the right to attend by preparing an art project, from a toddler's finger painting to a teenager's musical performance.

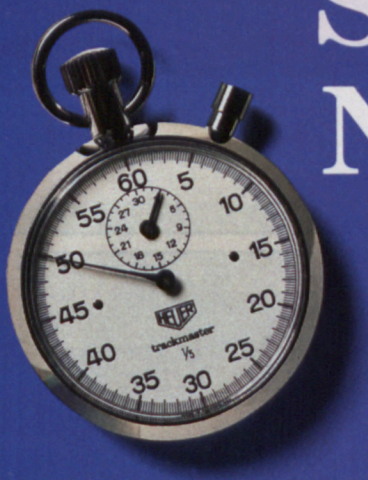
The state gives the first $500 towards the festival. Beyond that, Cunningham and her colleagues organize fund-raisers to cover costs.

"When this idea came up," Cunningham explains, "I'd already been getting donations and making up little bags of gifts for the children in the Special Olympics, so this was a natural.

"It's just something wonderful for the kids, and we enjoy that."

Larry Weaver

Paraprofessional Anna Cunningham reads a story to the kids. Colleague Jane Long helps out.



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WHAT WE DO

Like the rest of us, Pennsylvania cook Kathryn Patton's got a tough job. On the following pages, a look at the jobs we do and the challenges we face in our chosen professions.

Blair Reese

Unique Program Helps Paras Become Teachers

The problem: how to attract more minorities to the teaching profession to better meet the needs of a rapidly growing minority student population.

Nevada's unique solution: help minority teacher assistants become certified as teachers.

Responding to aggressive Association lobbying, Nevada legislators recently allocated $270,000 to develop and implement minority teacher recruitment programs statewide.

Of those funds, Clark County—Nevada's largest school district—received $180,000. For advice on how to make the most of that money, the district turned to the Clark County Classroom Teachers Association.

Clark County teachers knew just where to find qualified, highly motivated minority teacher candidates. They work daily with the more than 3,600 members of the Clark County Education Support Employee Association.

What better recruits for the teaching profession than instructional aides who've already developed a commitment to the classroom but don't have financial resources to complete college requirements for their credentials?

The district agreed with an Association proposal to use some of the funds to help 30 paraprofessionals—with at least 64 college credits each—pay for the rest of their college educations.

Also, the district and the local university agreed to set up flexible scheduling so the assistants can complete their student teaching without taking unpaid leave from their regular jobs.

Parapro Darren McCoy, who's worked with third graders at Harvey N. Dondero Elementary School for the past two years, is one of the program's enthusiastic participants.

McCoy—who originally wanted to go into hotel management—says his experiences as a paraprofessional convinced him to change his career plans.

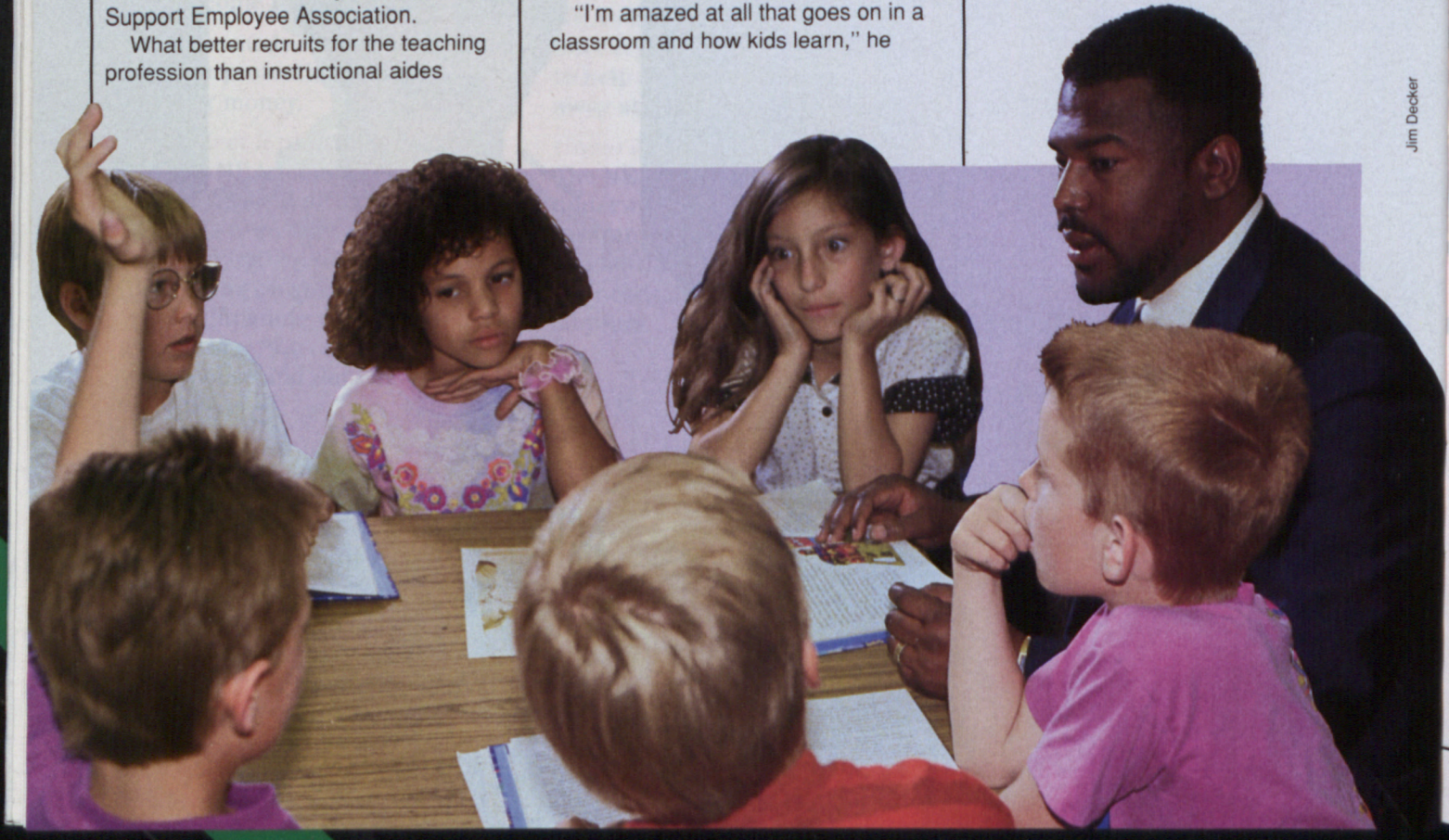
"I'm amazed at all that goes on in a classroom and how kids learn," he says. "And every day I see firsthand the great need for minority role models.

"In my district, for example, there are almost no Black male adults for Black male students—many of whom have adjustment and behavior problems—to look up to. It's a real dilemma."

McCoy tries to influence these kids now, but hopes to do more as a teacher. "I'd love to help youngsters turn their lives around," he adds.

Local President Annie Barclay says both students and instructors in the program have a special opportunity—and a special responsibility. "We have the chance here," Barclay says, "to prove that, when we want to, we can find ways to have the best, the brightest, the most culturally diverse group of teaching professionals in the nation."

Clark County paraprofessional Darren McCoy hopes to "help youngsters turn their lives around."



Jim Decker

Paraprofessionals Offer Advice

Need advice on how to help students with concerns and problems that go beyond academics? Three paraprofessionals who work in three very different situations offer tips gleaned from their own experiences, both on and off the job.

Bridging Cultural Gaps

Idaho teacher assistant Maria Carillo works in her state's Wilder district, where the student population is more than 90 percent Hispanic and the teaching staff is predominately white. Carillo offers these tips for bridging cultural gaps:

► Invite parents to a classroom conference early in the year, greet them warmly, and ask them what they expect of teachers and paras. Help them understand how important it is for their kids to do well in school.

► Encourage parents to volunteer their time in the classroom. Not only will staff and students benefit, but parents will educate one another about the school.

► Encourage students to get involved in school activities. Many will have much to do at home, but it's important for them to expand their horizons.

Helping Abused Kids

Paraprofessional Chris Peterson, president of the Education Support Personnel of Oakland (California), works with preschoolers in one of the district's child development centers.

Many of her charges have special problems: some have a history of being abused and are in protective service, others are living in foster homes, still others were born drug dependent. For aides in similar situations, Peterson offers this advice:

► Most important, push for good in-service training on how to deal with these special-needs kids. Learning how to complete paperwork isn't enough.

► On a day-to-day level, as soon as kids arrive each morning, look them over for any burns or bruises that might suggest physical abuse. Once you have proper training, ask the parent or guardian then and there about any suspicious injuries.

► Make note of any injuries in a log book. You need to protect yourself as well as the children. Report any suspected abuse to your immediate supervisor.

► Get help when you need it. When you fear losing your temper, ask a colleague to step in. Contact parents of children who habitually cause problems. And, call in the school nurse if you think you've got a child with a medical problem.

Rex Larson

Sherry Schmuker works with students at the Orchard View Middle School in Muskegon, Michigan.

Talking to Pregnant Teens

Sherry Schmuker, a paraprofessional in Muskegon, Michigan, volunteers many of her off-duty hours to Catholic Social Services, coaching teenagers who are about to become mothers for the first time. For months, she works one-on-one with these girls, most of whom are unmarried.

Here are Schmuker's tips for helping kids like these:

► Be available to listen when these girls want to talk. Some feel they've never been able to talk to anyone.

► Don't offer any opinions unless asked. Don't approve or disapprove. A good neutral response is, "That may work. That may be the route you need to go."

► If a girl does open up to you, give her time to go into depth.

► Let the girls know that you have an obligation to share the information with parents, teachers, or counselors, should you feel it necessary. Assure them that if you do this, it will be for their benefit.

► Assure pregnant teens that it's okay to be scared.

WHAT WE DO

Bob Gardner

Local Association, state: South Portland School Support Association, Maine

Job title: Painting/maintenance crew supervisor

Job duties: With two assistants, maintain the paint and the windows, inside and outside, on 10 schools. We also do small asbestos clean-ups—we get regular training and special equipment for that. And, because we have the extension ladders, we replace the outside security lights on the buildings.

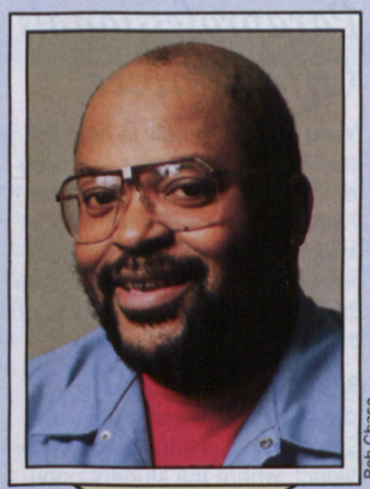
Favorite part of job: I love to paint, and I love to move around from school to school—to meet different people and talk to different people.

Most unusual day: No really unusual day comes to mind. But the days most pleasing to me are the days we spend in one place painting: the days we can look at what we've done and say, 'We accomplished something today.'

Pay: $411 a week gross after 21 years.

Greatest concern: People who know the right things to do to maintain safety—but don't do them. I try to make sure wherever I am that things are done the way they're supposed to be done.

Gordon Chibroski



Bob Chase

Tim Smith

Local Association, state: Southfield Education Support Association, Michigan

Job title: Head custodian

Job duties: Along with my assistant, Wendy Aquilina, make sure the school building is ready to open each day. I do plumbing, electrical, some touch-up painting, and other duties as assigned. There's a half-acre of grass to cut, 200 shrubs to trim, and sidewalks to plow in the wintertime.

Favorite part of job: The camaraderie with the teachers—we're all one family.

Most unusual day: When a doorknob was broken and I got trapped in the pump closet. I just beat on the wall and said a little prayer. After about three hours, somebody came.

Pay: $15.59 an hour after 12 years.

Greatest concern: The next generation. We have to get the message to our kids that they are the future.

Kim Bauldree

Ernie Hamilton

Local Association, state: Ithaca Central School District Employees Association, New York

Job title: Athletic fields keeper

Job duties: To take care of the athletic fields for the district's 13 schools. We seed the fields, put on all the lines and bases, put up lacrosse and soccer goals, mow lawns, remove snow, operate heavy equipment, and move anything to do with education.

Favorite part of job: I like doing things for the kids when they appreciate it.

Most unusual day: When we put in our all-weather track. We regraded the old track, laid down a blacktop base and a rubber coat, then painted the marks.

Pay: With my crew chief's stipend, about $29,000 after 24 years.

Greatest concern: I have six years left before I can retire at 55, and I worry whether the economy will hold up long enough—whether I'm going to have a retirement, the way things are going.

Zung Garrett

Local Association, state: Kodiak Island Education Support Association, Alaska

Job title: Night custodian

Job duties: Clean up the building after the school day, and help clean up the schools in town after the school year. Everything from moving furniture to cutting grass.

Favorite part of job: The work itself—I put my heart into it.

Most unusual day: The evening some students spray painted the halls. We had to clean it up by morning.

Jeff Graves

Pay: $1,203 gross every two weeks after 12 years.

Greatest concern: If I keep working as hard as we have to, I wonder if I'll be able to keep working long enough to retire.

Bruce Garrett

Local Association, state: Kodiak Island Education Support Association, Alaska

Job title: Maintenance mechanic

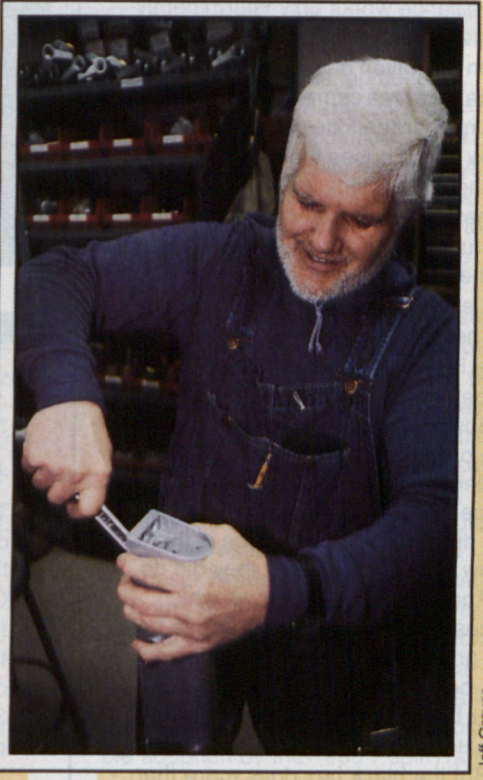
Job duties: Helping to maintain the heating, ventilation, electrical systems, plumbing, roofs, and refrigeration for the Kodiak Island district, which is about the size of Connecticut. Nine of the 14 schools can be reached only by boat or plane.

Favorite part of job: The people—students, school employees, community folks.

Most unusual day: When a school had no heat and an 85-mile-an-hour wind blew out a window in the teacher's house, where she was teaching about a dozen students. I put plywood over the window, and they went right on.

Pay: $35,000 a year after 10 years—but remember, regular gas costs $1.40 a gallon.

Greatest concern: When kids see how employees are treated, they don't learn to respect work.



Jeff Graves

Districts Install Video Cameras On Buses

Like colleagues in 35 states—most notably Texas, Georgia, and Florida—school bus drivers in Pulaski County, Arkansas, have recently had a video surveillance system installed in some of their buses.

Intended to keep student school bus riders in their seats, the so-called "black box" system was developed in 1989 by a Texas firm that manufactures bank surveillance systems.

The black box, a container designed to hold a video camera, faces the bus passengers. Turning on the bus's ignition lights a red light on the box and starts the camera—if it's there.

Unlike bank surveillance systems, which film continuously, school bus surveillance works only intermittently—to save money.

On any given day, only certain buses actually carry a camera in the black box, and neither the kids nor the drivers know which buses they are.

The theory: kids will assume the camera is working and choose to follow the rules rather than risk having their misbehavior on tape for school officials, and even their parents, to see.

The distributor claims that disciplinary incidents typically decline by 60 to 70 percent once the system is installed.

Bus mechanic and Pulaski Association of Support Staff member Edward Anderson agrees. "The system has helped in disciplining the kids. They say 'we didn't do it,' but the tape is there to show their parents what they did do."

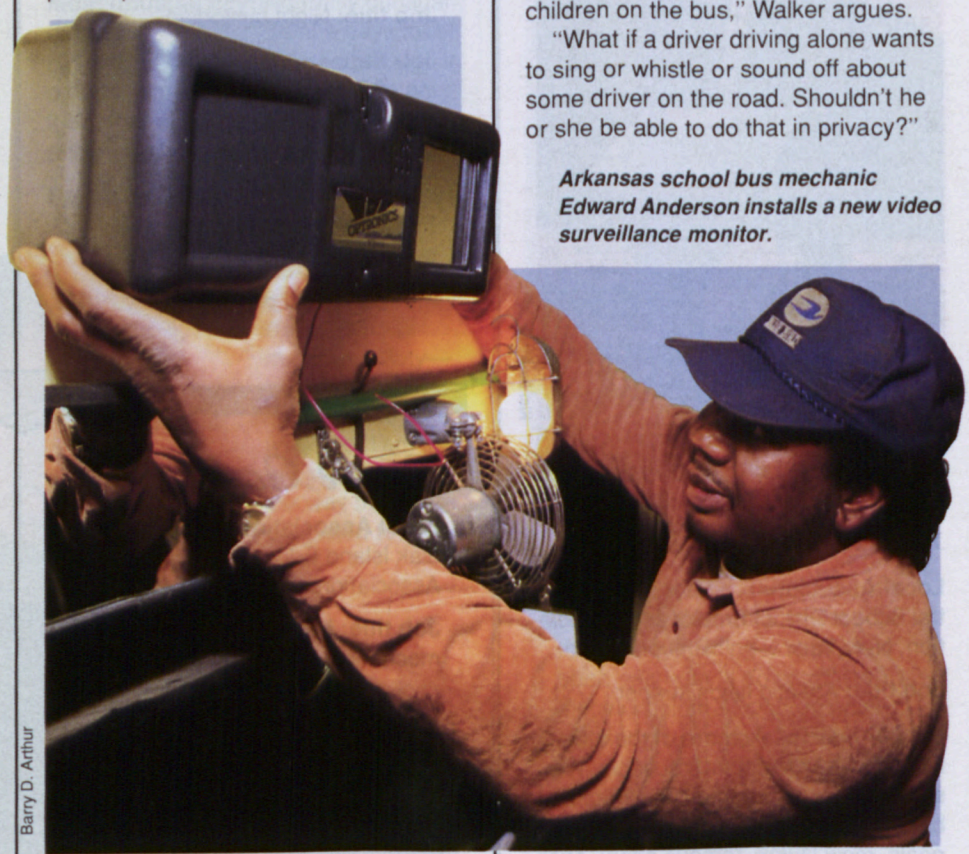
Anderson actually knows which boxes have the camera because he's the one who installs them—in the morning, before the drivers arrive—in whichever buses the district's transportation director decides to put them in.

But the black box does more than keep the kids in line, Anderson says. "It monitors the drivers as well." Not by videotaping them; drivers are out of camera range. But the sound track picks up their voices and records their interactions with passengers.

Which makes some drivers a little uncomfortable. "Many of us think it's strange that the drivers can't activate and deactivate the camera," says Pulaski bus driver Eunice Walker.

"We feel that we should be able to turn off the tape when there are no children on the bus," Walker argues.

"What if a driver driving alone wants to sing or whistle or sound off about some driver on the road. Shouldn't he or she be able to do that in privacy?"



Barry D. Arthur

Arkansas school bus mechanic Edward Anderson installs a new video surveillance monitor.

5.6 Million Get New License

Two months after the April 1 deadline for passing the test for the new federally mandated Commercial Drivers License (CDL), some 5.6 million drivers of trucks and buses across the country—including perhaps 360,000 school bus drivers—had obtained the new license.

Pass rates after the first few tries were 85 to 90 percent in most states, according to the Federal Highway Administration.

The agency expects from 100,000 to 300,000 additional drivers to pass the test by the time all the test takers in the initial round have either passed or given up. Those without new licenses may not drive commercially until they pass the test.

"One reason pass rates were high is because our state Association took an active stand: we

New Passengers, Old Dangers

Bus safety concerns this year have shifted to two new populations of school bus riders: preschoolers and disabled students.

With public preschool programs expanding and over 90 percent of disabled Americans age 3-21 now attending regular schools, more and more students fit into these two categories. Getting them to and from school safely has become a major concern of the nation's school bus drivers.

But there are problems. One is that not all drivers get the training they need to handle special populations.

"None of the drivers in this district have had training," says Tom Buchanan, incoming president of the Dundee Association of Transportation Employees, outside Chicago. "I read about the issues, I know what they are, but I haven't been trained to handle them."

Another problem: according to a recent survey by *Education Week*, few states require restraining devices for preschoolers. New York is the only state to require child seats for preschoolers under the age of four.

Although there's no federal rule about how to seat preschoolers, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) advises districts with small buses to attach child seats to regular seats using lap belts.

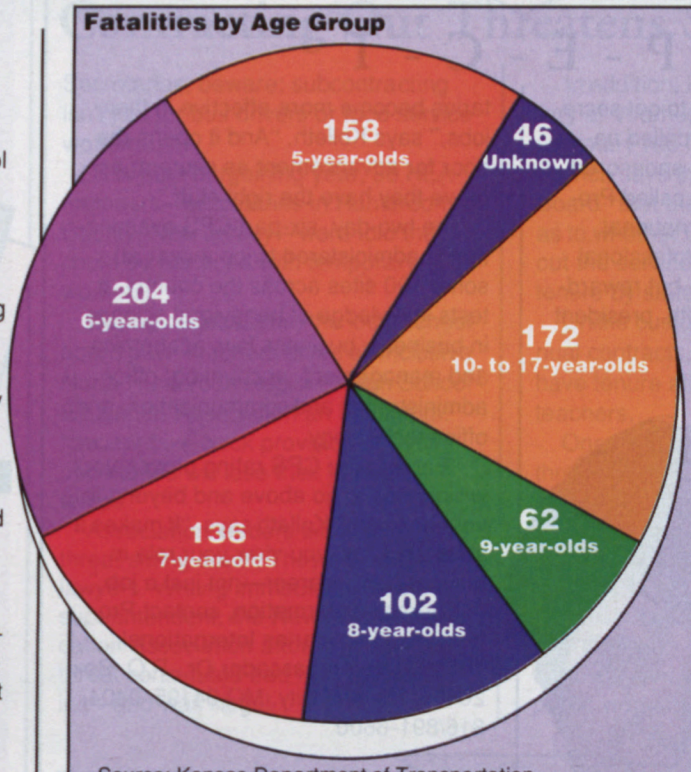
But that doesn't help the Hazelwood, Missouri, school district, which has no small buses—and no lap belts.

To serve a new early childhood program, the district outfitted three of its large buses with a child restraint system that consists of little vests strapped to the seatbacks. The children slip into the vests and secure them with Velcro closures.

"In one of the district's regular safety meetings, the drivers wondered how one driver could get 14 or 15 kids (the typical load) out in case of fire," says Diane Franklin, president of the bus driver group in the Hazelwood Association of Support Personnel.

"They decided the best way would be to cut the restraints off, so they've suggested keeping scissors on board."

Some national specifics for preschoolers may be forthcoming. A committee is now drafting proposed national guidelines for the transportation of preschoolers and infants, for possible adoption by the 1995 Pupil Transportation Standards Conference.



Who's Most Vulnerable?

When accidents happen while school buses are loading and unloading, who's most likely to get hurt?

Figures compiled by the Kansas Department of Transportation from 1969 to 1990 show six-year-olds, with 204 fatalities, have been at greatest risk.

The study also shows that more training of drivers and children, plus design changes in buses, produces results: a reduction in the number of loading zone fatalities. Throughout the entire period 1969-90, loading zone deaths averaged 44 a year. In 1990, however, there were only 18.

helped our members pass this test," explains Marilyn Roemer, Indiana bus driver and secretary of the NEA ESP caucus.

Over the past two years, NEA and its affiliates offered school bus drivers throughout the country the training they needed to be successful.

Why is the CDL significant? Some say it's because, for the first time, drivers of buses and trucks nationwide are guaranteed to have passed a test specific to the vehicle they'll be driving.

But Michigan Education Association staffer Gretchen Dziadosz disagrees. "Many school bus drivers in my state argue that the test doesn't really measure what they do. These drivers tell me," Dziadosz explains, "that the CDL was really designed for truck drivers."

To address this concern, several states have developed "school bus only" variations of the test. MEA is working to develop a similar test for school bus drivers in Michigan.

R - E - S - P - E - C - T

There's a movement afoot to get secretaries greater respect. It's called national certification, and it's sponsored by a national organization called Professional Secretaries International.

Becoming a Certified Professional Secretary takes rigorous—but rewarding—effort, says Jan Kolleth, president of the Grosse Pointe (Michigan) Association of Education Office Personnel and a member of the PSI board of directors.

"CPS helps secretaries become more effective in their jobs," says Kolleth. "And it opens the door for advancement as secretaries prove they have the right stuff."

The two-day, six-part CPS examination is administered twice a year at some 100 sites across the country. It tests knowledge of behavioral science in business, business law, economics and management, accounting, office administration and communication, and office technology.

"Earning the CPS rating proves your willingness to go above and beyond in your position," Kolleth says. "It makes a statement that you view your role in business as a career—not just a job."

For more information, contact Professional Secretaries International, 10502 N.W. Ambassador Dr., P.O. Box 20404, Kansas City, MO 64195-0404, 816/891-6600.

Jan Kolleth displays proof of her status as a "certified professional secretary."

Bob Chase

'Eyes and Ears' Of the Office

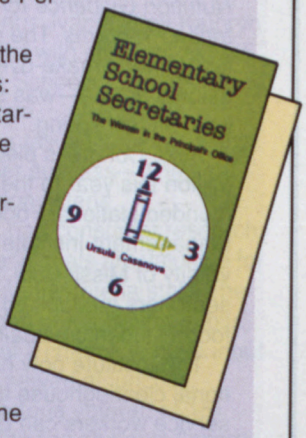
New research on elementary school secretaries finds them to be up-front, overburdened, undervalued—and indispensable.

According to *Elementary School Secretaries: The Women in the Principal's Office*, elementary school secretaries function as "substitute parent, the eyes and ears of the head, sounding board, the leader of the school support staff, gatekeeper, and financial consultant."

A former teacher and current assistant professor at Arizona State University's College of Education, author Ursula Casanova (above) has observed the scope of the secretary's workload at close range. Several years ago, Casanova stepped into a principal's job midyear. Fortunately, the secretary working with her was a dynamo.

"She helped me to establish priorities, to understand the school's history, and to connect with the school and district staff," Casanova recalls.

As she later moved from principal to academic, Casanova studied the people who helped her do her job. Her book is the result of a survey of over 700 members of the National Association of Education Office Personnel.



Some of the key findings:

► Secretaries' days are fraught with human interactions—40 or more during a two-hour period—not including phone calls.

► Secretaries play a vital role in receiving, transmitting, and disseminating information. The secretary, Casanova writes, "is the only person in the school who, by virtue of location and role, regularly communicates with all members of the school staff, central office personnel, parents, and the community at large."

► Five out of six secretaries surveyed viewed themselves as "keeper of the children." When questioned about their work preferences, secretaries ranked working with students highest.

► Elementary principals' secretaries' biggest complaint: too much responsibility for too little money.

Casanova's research earned her Arizona State University's top research award and recognition from the American Education Research Association.

Elementary School Secretaries: The Women in the Principal's Office may be ordered for $16 from Sage Publications, P.O. Box 5084, Newbury Park, CA 91359-9924, 805/499-8721.

Contracting Out Threatens Secretaries

Secretaries, beware: subcontracting isn't just for bus drivers or food service workers.

This past bargaining year, 36 NEA members—secretaries in Hunterdon County, New Jersey—were told they could be replaced with temporary workers.

During negotiations, the local school board gave teachers of the all-inclusive North Hunterdon Regional High School Education Association an ultimatum: "accept take-back provisions or your secretaries will lose their jobs to temps."

Association leaders didn't take the threat sitting down. They called their lawyers. Writing immediately to the superintendent, the New Jersey Education Association attorneys said the threat constituted bad faith bargaining—and was illegal.

In addition, Roberta Gooley, a secretary at Voorhees High School and the secretary rep for the North Hunterdon district, says the lawyers warned the Board "that there was a legal question as to whether the district could contract out the services of people who have tenure by state statute."

Unlike custodians, say, who get annual contracts, New Jersey secretaries have tenure after three years—just like teachers.

One day after receiving a letter threatening legal action on the tenure issue, the school board recanted, voting not to subcontract secretarial services.

Sums up Gooley, "Privatization is a national trend we all must watch out for. The threat we faced—and how it was handled—shows the importance of public workers being organized."

Signs of the Times

Secretaries are diplomats—the "people pleasers" of school offices. But their desire to tell it like it is can be found in the signs that decorate their offices. Here are a sampling.

"Would you be terribly upset if I asked you to take your stupid problem down the hall?"

Catherine Williams, secretary, Chatham County (Georgia) Association of Educators

"There will be no crisis next week. My schedule is already full."

Cathy Byington, secretary, Sioux Falls (South Dakota) Education Association

Picture of a queen: "More than merely a secretary; slightly less than a god."

Mary Ann Smith, clerical specialist, Pinellas (Florida) ESP Association

"This desk belongs to an OVERworked, OVERlooked, OVERdrawn, but still basically fun person."

Cathy Harrison, secretary, York (Maine) ESP Unit of the York Teachers Association

To a boss: "You know where you're going. God knows where you're going. But does your secretary know where you're going?"

Barbara Throm, secretary, past-president of the Renton (Washington) Technical College Classified Personnel

Nutrition for The Nation

The push to change America's eating habits is on. One of the first stops: school lunchrooms.

For the first time in nearly 10 years, the federal government has revised its nutrition guidelines. Now, instead of the basic four food groups, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has released a food pyramid.

After five years of study and preparation, more than $400,000 in revisions, and a fair share of controversy, "The Eating Right Pyramid" outlines the USDA's new guidelines for American diets.

Why the controversy? Dairy and meat producers objected when they got wind of the new priority the pyramid places on fruits, vegetables, and grains. But after months of stalling—and pressure from nutrition groups—the USDA finally released the chart with no substantive changes.

At the same time, Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan declared school lunch a priority.

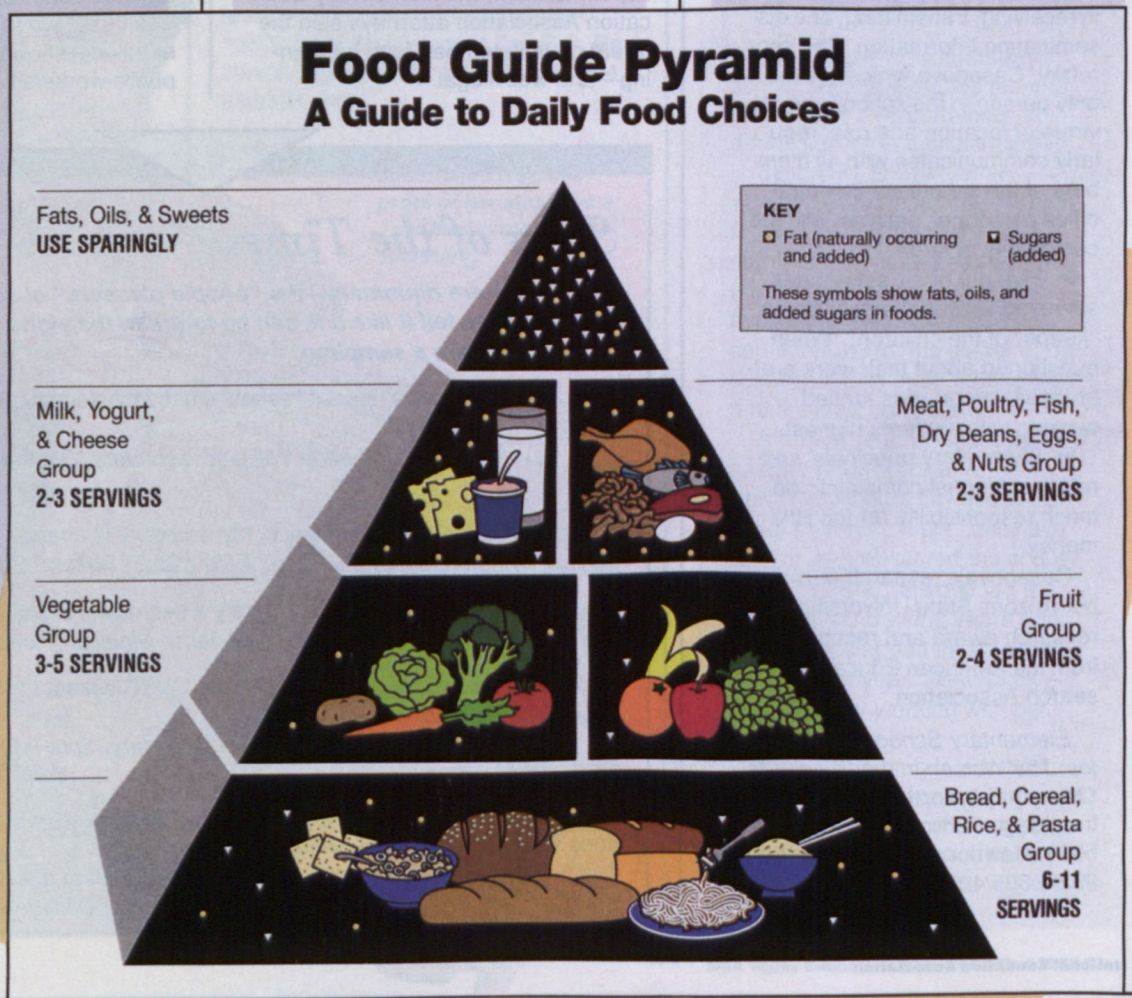
As part of its effort to improve the nutritional value of school meals, the USDA recently reformed the list of commodities it buys, offering schools lower-fat ground beef and cheese, low-salt vegetables, and low-sugar fruits.

In addition, Secretary Madigan pledged that by 1994 all school food service workers would have the education and training they need to prepare meals that meet the new nutrition guidelines.

To that end, the USDA recently released *Building for the Future: Nutrition Guidance for Child Nutrition Programs.* The guide—offering menu make-overs and nutritional advice—was sent to schools last spring.

Also, Congress pledged $1 million this year to the recently founded National Food Service Management Institute at the University of Mississippi, where researchers are looking at healthy foods students actually like.

The Institute now has a national clearinghouse that food service workers can call (800/321-3054) with their questions.



Lunchtime Chats Pay Off For Cooks—and Students

Every day, Pennsylvania cook Kathryn Patton sits down with students at Curwensville Area Schools for a little lunch and conversation.

When Patton talks, students listen. And—key to her success—when students talk, Patton listens.

Part lesson, part consumer research, Patton's cafeteria chats are valuable for both students and cafeteria staff. The cook encourages better eating habits; the students get a chance to have input into what gets served at lunch.

A school cafeteria veteran of 15 years, Patton talks to students "about eating right and balancing their meals, and why certain foods are good—or bad—for them."

Then, Patton listens. "Students are pretty honest," she says, "and they like having some input into their meals. They like soup and sandwiches, and they like to be told what they're getting.

"A former manager decided to offer students a 'cosmos' sandwich for lunch. The students wouldn't touch it. They weren't sure what it contained. That convinced us to be direct."

The straight talk helps head cook Patton produce nutritious food students will eat. And, surprisingly, it helps her keep subcontractors at bay.

Two years ago, the schools' kitchens were heavily in debt, so school board members fired the managers. Patton and colleagues Peggy Blackburn and Martha Tozer convinced the board that contracting out wasn't the answer—leaving the kitchen in their hands was.

"It hasn't been easy, given budget cutbacks and commodity cutbacks, but we're slowly pulling out of this rut," says Patton. "Kids are beginning to eat their lunch in our cafeteria again.

"And as long as children keep coming to these schools," Patton adds, "we cafeteria workers will continue to care for them."

Blair Reese

Cafeteria worker Kathryn Patton dishes up lunch for 900 students at three schools.

Kitchen Comments

What's happening in your schools' kitchens? Here are a few answers from NEA members around the nation.

▶ "We're fighting fat by baking our french fries instead of frying them."
—Jamma Basik, Mt. Morris, Pennsylvania

▶ "We're trying to improve the working conditions in our kitchens. There are too many situations where an accident might happen."
—Carolyn Benson, Huntsville, Alabama

▶ "We've been hit by the recession. As a result, the cooks and cafeteria have been replaced by vending machines."
—Patti Clemson, Montville, Ohio

▶ "We're seeing more kids involved in the free lunch programs, or kids coming to school hungry."
—Barbara Boatright, St. Mary's County, Maryland

▶ "We're on a 'save the environment' campaign. We're getting rid of all styrofoam and telling students to use the same philosophy when they go out to eat."
—Gladys Sanderbeck, Moon Area Schools, Pennsylvania

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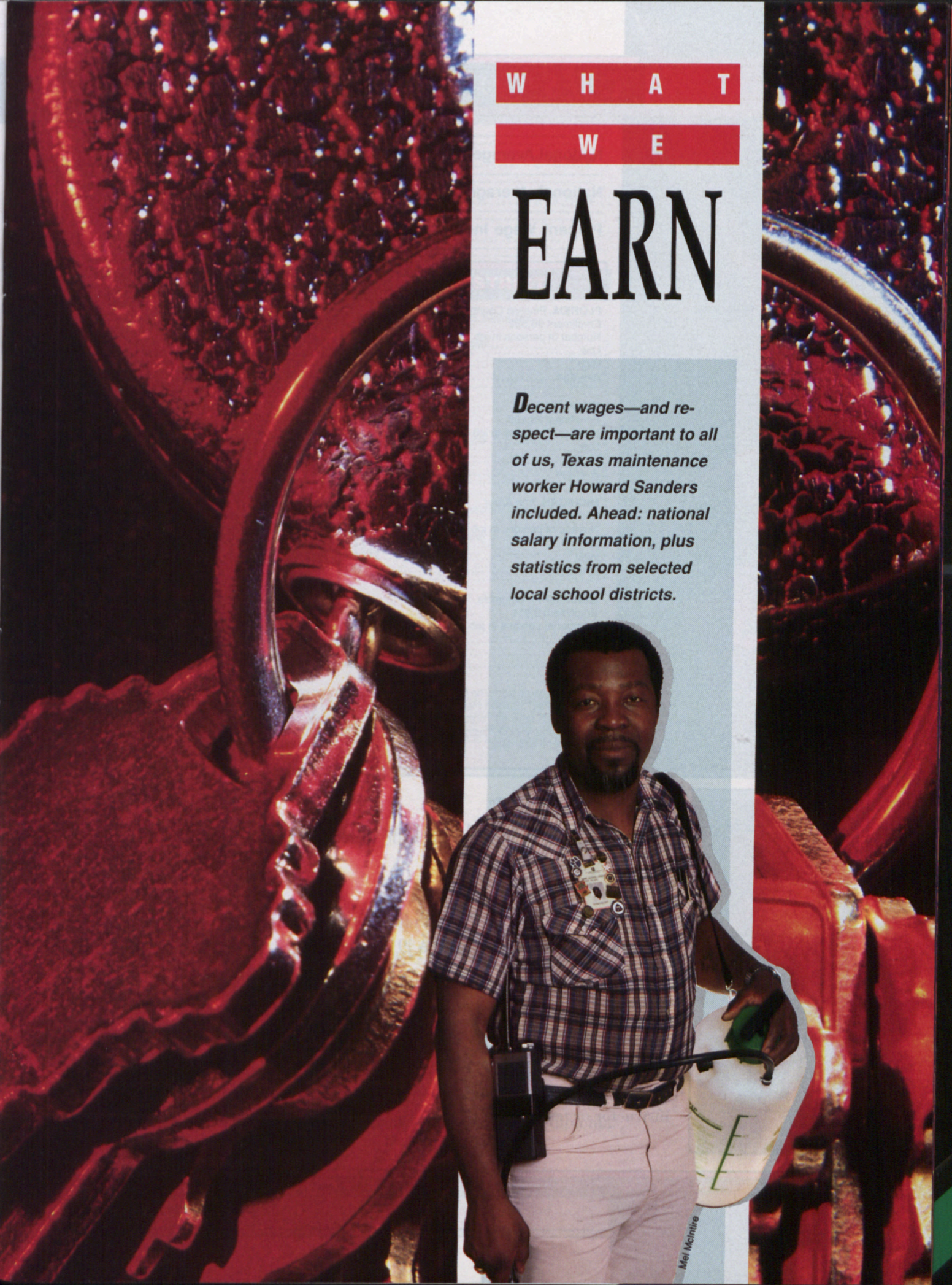
WHAT WE EARN

Decent wages—and respect—are important to all of us, Texas maintenance worker Howard Sanders included. Ahead: national salary information, plus statistics from selected local school districts.



Mel McIntire

CUSTODIANS

National Average Hourly Wage, 1990-91	**$9.05**
National Average Hourly Wage, 1991-92	**$9.35**
Percent Wage Increase	**3.3**

1991-92 WAGES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

FLORIDA, Pinellas County, Clearwater
Enrollment 96,592

Number of persons in job	588
Low	$6.24
High	$8.74
Average	**$6.79**

IDAHO, Boise
Enrollment 23,108

Number of persons in job	138
Low	$5.39
High	$12.98
Average	**ND**

MICHIGAN, Ann Arbor
Enrollment 14,603

Number of persons in job	192
Low	$9.20
High	$13.28
Average	**ND**

MISSISSIPPI, Columbia
Enrollment 2,011

Number of persons in job	11
Low	$4.35
High	$6.00
Average	**$5.28**

MISSOURI, Hazelwood, Florissant
Enrollment 17,602

Number of persons in job	137
Low	$6.55
High	$12.30
Average	**$11.00**

NEW MEXICO, Los Lunas
Enrollment 5,755

Number of persons in job	29
Low	$6.32
High	$9.83
Average	**$8.31**

OHIO, Dublin
Enrollment 8,147

Number of persons in job	52
Low	$8.89
High	$13.79
Average	**$11.59**

PENNSYLVANIA, Methacton, Norristown
Enrollment 3,232

Number of persons in job	25
Low	$11.53
High	$13.12
Average	**ND**

All figures taken from *The National Survey of Salaries and Wages in Public Schools; Part 3, Wages and Salaries Paid Support Personnel, 1991-92.* © 1992 by Educational Research Service. Hourly wage rates and salaries presented as national averages reflect non-weighted averages of the approximately 1,000 districts that provided data reported to ERS. Appreciation is expressed to ERS for use of these data.

All section photos by Ellen M. Banner

Name: Howard Sanders

Local Association, state: Dallas Educational Support Personnel Association, Texas

Years of service: 20

Current pay: $12.17 an hour, 12 months a year

Most recent major purchase: A '91 Toyota.

Biggest financial worry: Retirement—I'm concerned I won't have enough money to live on.

I think I'm worth: $18 an hour.

Most rewarding on-the-job moment: When I'm able to help others.

I'm looking forward to: Advancement. I really would like to become an instructor or teacher in my field.

CLERK-TYPISTS

National Average Salary, 1990-91	**$16,859**
National Average Salary, 1991-92	**$17,646**
Percent Salary Increase	**4.7**

1991-92 SALARIES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

FLORIDA, Pinellas County, Clearwater
Enrollment 96,592

Number of persons in job	35
Low	$9,929
High	$18,229
Average	**$13,746**

IDAHO, Boise
Enrollment 23,108

Number of persons in job	2
Low	$9,241
High	$9,561
Average	**$9,401**

MISSISSIPPI, Columbia
Enrollment 2,011

Number of persons in job	2
Low	$7,735
High	$7,861
Average	**$7,798**

MISSOURI, Hazelwood, Florissant
Enrollment 17,602

Number of persons in job	7
Low	$10,410
High	$15,266
Average	**$13,811**

OHIO, Dublin
Enrollment 8,147

Number of persons in job	2
Low	$21,798
High	$22,176
Average	**$21,987**

PENNSYLVANIA, Methacton, Norristown
Enrollment 3,232

Number of persons in job	1
Low	$11,217
High	$11,217
Average	**$11,217**

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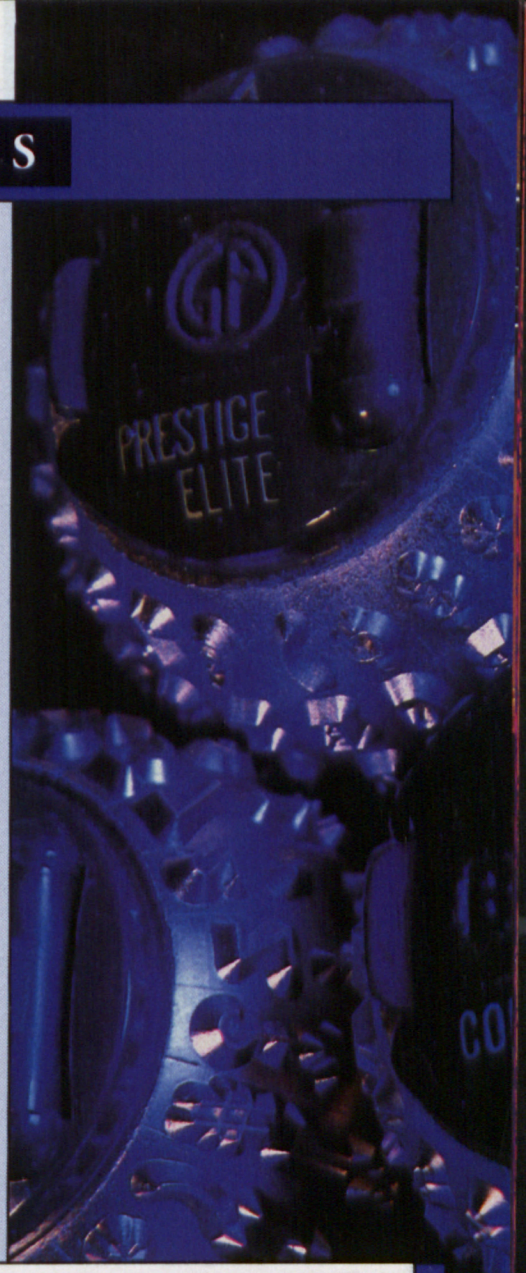

Name: Reba Nelson

Local Association, state: Gadsden State Community College Education Association, Alabama

Years of service: 8

Current pay: $20,064 for a 12-month year

Most recent major purchase: A '90 Ford Probe.

Biggest financial worry: Survival, I suppose. My daughter is a college senior. With my education costs and hers, our budget's pretty tight.

I think I'm worth: God's many blessings.

Most rewarding on-the-job moment: When I've helped a prospective student, and then they come back in to show me their first *A*.

I'm looking forward to: The day I get my four-year college diploma.

LIBRARY CLERKS

National Average Salary, 1990-91	**$12,696**
National Average Salary, 1991-92	**$13,347**
Percent Salary Increase	**5.1**

1991-92 SALARIES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

FLORIDA, Pinellas County, Clearwater
Enrollment 96,592

Number of persons in job	35
Low	$7,532
High	$12,855
Average	**$9,522**

IDAHO, Boise
Enrollment 23,108

Number of persons in job	46
Low	$5,500
High	$14,997
Average	**$10,641**

MICHIGAN, Ann Arbor
Enrollment 14,603

Number of persons in job	8
Low	$20,209
High	$20,209
Average	**$20,209**

MISSISSIPPI, Columbia
Enrollment 2,011

Number of persons in job	1
Low	$6,400
High	$6,400
Average	**$6,400**

NEW MEXICO, Los Lunas
Enrollment 5,755

Number of persons in job	3
Low	$7,493
High	$10,669
Average	**$8,552**

OHIO, Dublin
Enrollment 8,147

Number of persons in job	2
Low	$13,758
High	$13,758
Average	**$13,758**

PENNSYLVANIA, Methacton, Norristown
Enrollment 3,232

Number of persons in job	2
Low	$13,552
High	$14,805
Average	**$14,179**

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Name: Virginia Clark

Local Association, state: Attala County Association of Educators, Mississippi

Years of service: 3

Current pay: $5,800 for a 12-month year

Most recent major purchase: A piano for my daughter.

Biggest financial worry: Meeting my financial obligations each month.

I think I'm worth: At least $15,000 a year.

Most rewarding on-the-job moment: Seeing a child get lost in a book he or she really enjoys reading.

I'm looking forward to: A day when education support personnel are respected and paid according to their worth and ability.

BUS DRIVERS

National Average Hourly Wage, 1990-91 ..... $9.52

National Average Hourly Wage, 1991-92..... $10.04

Percent Wage Increase..... 5.5

1991-92 WAGES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

FLORIDA, Pinellas County, Clearwater
Enrollment 96,592
Number of persons in job 442
Low $7.80
High $10.92
Average $8.34

MICHIGAN, Ann Arbor
Enrollment 14,603
Number of persons in job 143
Low $9.41
High $12.00
Average ..... ND

MISSISSIPPI, Columbia
Enrollment 2,011
Number of persons in job 20
Low $5.85
High $6.69
Average $6.14

MISSOURI, Hazelwood, Florissant
Enrollment 17,602
Number of persons in job 96
Low $7.20
High $11.00
Average ..... ND

NEW MEXICO, Los Lunas
Enrollment 5,755
Number of persons in job 39
Low $7.67
High $10.27
Average $8.51

OHIO, Dublin
Enrollment 8,147
Number of persons in job 71
Low $9.97
High $13.43
Average $12.47

PENNSYLVANIA, Methacton, Norristown
Enrollment 3,232
Number of persons in job 52
Low $12.75
High $12.75
Average $12.75

All figures taken from *The National Survey of Salaries and Wages in Public Schools; Part 3, Wages and Salaries Paid Support Personnel, 1991-92.* © 1992 by Educational Research Service. Hourly wage rates and salaries presented as national averages reflect non-weighted averages of the approximately 1,000 districts that provided data reported to ERS. Appreciation is expressed to ERS for use of these data.

Name: Bill Myra

Local Association, state: Eureka Public Schools Classified Personnel Association, Montana

Years of service: 1

Current pay: $9.70 an hour, 9 months a year

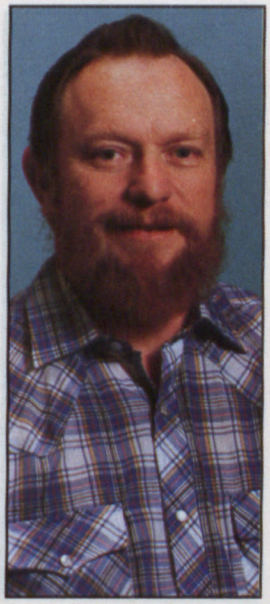
Most recent major purchase: A house my wife and I bought last summer.

Biggest financial worry: Medical costs.

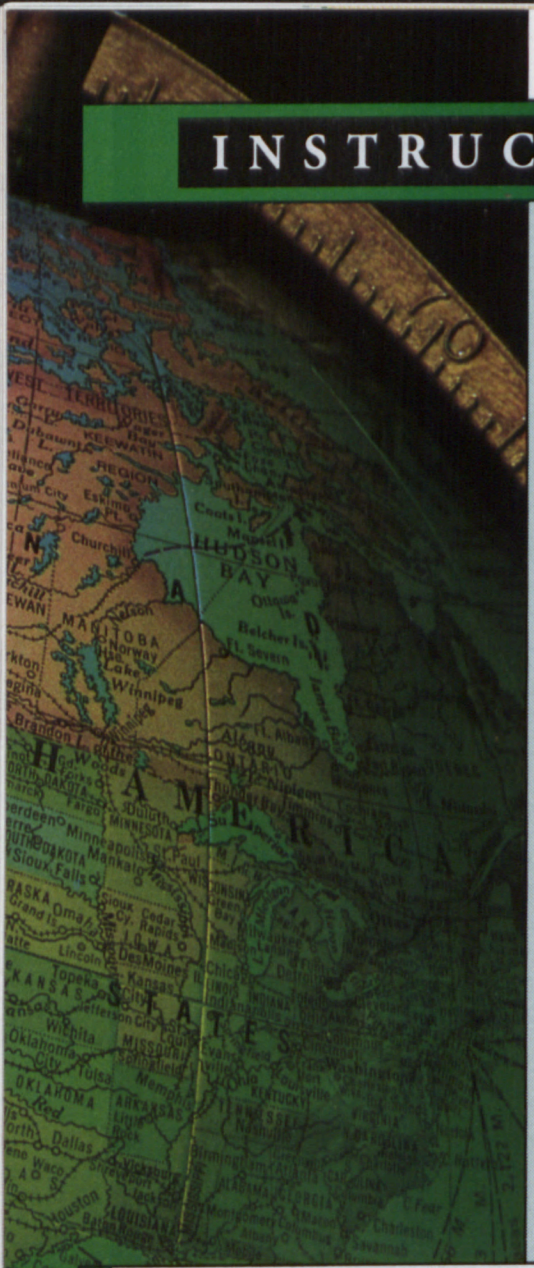
I think I'm worth: I get paid well for driving a bus, but I only drive 20 hours. I work as a janitor the other 20, at only $6.70 an hour.

Most rewarding on-the-job moment: When the kids give me little things like pictures and cookies and things to stick on the dash.

I'm looking forward to: Relaxing. We left California to take life easy.



INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANTS



National Average Hourly Wage, 1990-91	**$7.77**
National Average Hourly Wage, 1991-92	**$8.15**
Percent Wage Increase	**4.9**

1991-92 WAGES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

FLORIDA, Pinellas County, Clearwater
Enrollment 96,592
Number of persons in job 440
Low $5.56
High $10.60
Average $7.38

IDAHO, Boise
Enrollment 23,108
Number of persons in job 197
Low $5.39
High $11.14
Average ..... ND

MICHIGAN, Ann Arbor
Enrollment 14,603
Number of persons in job 116
Low $9.10
High $12.40
Average ..... ND

MISSISSIPPI, Columbia
Enrollment 2,011
Number of persons in job 55
Low $4.35
High $5.51
Average $4.93

MISSOURI, Hazelwood, Florissant
Enrollment 17,602
Number of persons in job 68
Low $8.43
High $8.43
Average $8.43

NEW MEXICO, Los Lunas
Enrollment 5,755
Number of persons in job 48
Low $5.00
High $11.00
Average $7.69

OHIO, Dublin
Enrollment 8,147
Number of persons in job 8
Low $10.37
High $13.59
Average $11.59

PENNSYLVANIA, Methacton, Norristown
Enrollment 3,232
Number of persons in job 27
Low $8.53
High $13.32
Average $9.72

All figures taken from *The National Survey of Salaries and Wages in Public Schools; Part 3, Wages and Salaries Paid Support Personnel, 1991-92.* © 1992 by Educational Research Service. Hourly wage rates and salaries presented as national averages reflect non-weighted averages of the approximately 1,000 districts that provided data reported to ERS. Appreciation is expressed to ERS for use of these data.

Name: Ruthie Wright

Local Association, state: Webster Association of Educators, Louisiana

Years of service: 12

Current pay: $7,000 for a 9-month year

Most recent major purchase: Clothing for my grandchildren.

Biggest financial worry: Getting my house paid off.

I think I'm worth: A billion dollars—plus! There's no limit on it, really. The things I do in my job—you just can't put a price on it some days.

Most rewarding on-the-job moment: When I see a child I've worked with learn their numbers or the alphabet. To see the excitement on their faces—now, that's rewarding.

I'm looking forward to: Doing volunteer work for the Special Olympics.

NONINSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANTS

National Average Hourly Wage, 1990-91	**$7.43**
National Average Hourly Wage, 1991-92	**$7.70**
Percent Wage Increase	**3.6**

1991-92 WAGES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

FLORIDA, Pinellas County, Clearwater
Enrollment 96,592

Number of persons in job	806
Low	$5.29
High	$9.84
Average	**$6.36**

IDAHO, Boise
Enrollment 23,108

Number of persons in job	27
Low	$5.39
High	$10.05
Average	**ND**

MICHIGAN, Ann Arbor
Enrollment 14,603

Number of persons in job	15
Low	ND
High	ND
Average	**ND**

MISSISSIPPI, Columbia
Enrollment 2,011

Number of persons in job	3
Low	$4.35
High	$5.51
Average	**$4.75**

MISSOURI, Hazelwood, Florissant
Enrollment 17,602

Number of persons in job	81
Low	$4.25
High	$7.25
Average	**$5.84**

NEW MEXICO, Los Lunas
Enrollment 5,755

Number of persons in job	9
Low	$6.59
High	$9.88
Average	**$7.58**

OHIO, Dublin
Enrollment 8,147

Number of persons in job	1
Low	$8.57
High	$8.57
Average	**$8.57**

PENNSYLVANIA, Methacton, Norristown
Enrollment 3,232

Number of persons in job	7
Low	$7.56
High	$7.56
Average	**$7.56**

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Name: Jane Bausa

Local Association, state: San Diego Classified Employee Association, California

Years of service: 11

Current pay: $9.90 an hour, 30 hours a week, 12 months a year

Most recent major purchase: Our house, about 4 years ago.

Biggest financial worry: Retirement—and I still have 20 years to work.

I think I'm worth: More than what I'm making, after all these years.

Most rewarding on-the-job moment: When I can help the children I work with in the guidance office by showing them someone who cares.

I'm looking forward to: The outcome of our pay equity study, so I'll be able to find out how much I'm really worth in this district.

CENTRAL OFFICE SECRETARIES

National Average Salary, 1990-91	**$21,303**
National Average Salary, 1991-92	**$22,309**
Percent Salary Increase	**4.7**

1991-92 SALARIES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

FLORIDA, Pinellas County, Clearwater
Enrollment 96,592

Number of persons in job	114
Low	$11,800
High	$37,753
Average	**$20,266**

IDAHO, Boise
Enrollment 23,108

Number of persons in job	12
Low	$9,938
High	$26,332
Average	**$17,625**

MICHIGAN, Ann Arbor
Enrollment 14,603

Number of persons in job	12
Low	$30,145
High	$34,660
Average	**$33,890**

MISSISSIPPI, Columbia
Enrollment 2,011

Number of persons in job	2
Low	$11,192
High	$12,249
Average	**$11,721**

MISSOURI, Hazelwood, Florissant
Enrollment 17,602

Number of persons in job	14
Low	$14,080
High	$27,685
Average	**$23,445**

NEW MEXICO, Los Lunas
Enrollment 5,755

Number of persons in job	7
Low	$14,902
High	$26,296
Average	**$18,647**

OHIO, Dublin
Enrollment 8,147

Number of persons in job	10
Low	$23,203
High	$26,766
Average	**$25,626**

PENNSYLVANIA, Methacton, Norristown
Enrollment 3,232

Number of persons in job	5
Low	$17,809
High	$29,265
Average	**$23,387**

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Name: Janett Harris

Local Association, state: Allegany County Educational Services Council, Maryland

Years of service: 13

Current pay: $27,000 for a 12-month year

Most recent major purchase: An '87 Ford Taurus.

Biggest financial worry: My daughter's college education.

I think I'm worth: I'm making pretty close to what I feel is a fair salary.

Most rewarding on-the-job moment: Knowing that in an emergency, we—here in the maintenance department—take care of the children quickly and efficiently.

I'm looking forward to: A day when I can feel comfortable with how our school board and county work together.

BUILDING SECRETARIES

National Average Salary, 1990-91	**$16,953**
National Average Salary, 1991-92	**$17,784**
Percent Salary Increase	**4.9**

1991-92 SALARIES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

FLORIDA, Pinellas County, Clearwater
Enrollment 96,592

Number of persons in job	129
Low	$12,801
High	$26,213
Average	**$18,280**

IDAHO, Boise
Enrollment 23,108

Number of persons in job	107
Low	$5,001
High	$25,486
Average	**$13,731**

MICHIGAN, Ann Arbor
Enrollment 14,603

Number of persons in job	53
Low	$19,103
High	$25,709
Average	**$23,875**

MISSISSIPPI, Columbia
Enrollment 2,011

Number of persons in job	9
Low	$7,125
High	$13,709
Average	**$8,384**

MISSOURI, Hazelwood, Florissant
Enrollment 17,602

Number of persons in job	35
Low	$10,773
High	$20,091
Average	**$15,841**

NEW MEXICO, Los Lunas
Enrollment 5,755

Number of persons in job	15
Low	$13,237
High	$17,637
Average	**$15,394**

OHIO, Dublin
Enrollment 8,147

Number of persons in job	23
Low	$17,638
High	$19,521
Average	**$18,639**

PENNSYLVANIA, Methacton, Norristown
Enrollment 3,232

Number of persons in job	14
Low	$15,218
High	$22,637
Average	**$20,452**

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Name: Rose Mary Gulledge

Local Association, state: Support Staff of Elgin Community College Association, Illinois

Years of service: 8

Current pay: $20,000 for a 12-month year

Most recent major purchase: A stove, refrigerator, and microwave.

Biggest financial worry: Right now, I don't have any. I'm at a time in my life when I'm financially sound.

I think I'm worth: $30,000 a year.

Most rewarding on-the-job moment: When I see students graduate through our program in the college's Business Division.

I'm looking forward to: An increase in salary and benefits for our members.

CAFETERIA WORKERS

National Average Hourly Wage, 1990-91	**$7.19**
National Average Hourly Wage, 1991-92	**$7.39**
Percent Wage Increase	**2.8**

1991-92 WAGES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

FLORIDA, Pinellas County, Clearwater
Enrollment 96,592

Number of persons in job	620
Low	$5.75
High	$8.88
Average	**$6.49**

IDAHO, Boise
Enrollment 23,108

Number of persons in job	186
Low	$5.75
High	$14.32
Average	**$6.79**

MICHIGAN, Ann Arbor
Enrollment 14,603

Number of persons in job	62
Low	$7.25
High	$11.20
Average	**ND**

MISSISSIPPI, Columbia
Enrollment 2,011

Number of persons in job	27
Low	$4.37
High	$5.02
Average	**$4.63**

MISSOURI, Hazelwood, Florissant
Enrollment 17,602

Number of persons in job	98
Low	$5.00
High	$8.85
Average	**$8.00**

NEW MEXICO, Los Lunas
Enrollment 5,755

Number of persons in job	38
Low	$6.05
High	$9.07
Average	**$7.47**

OHIO, Dublin
Enrollment 8,147

Number of persons in job	33
Low	$8.19
High	$10.70
Average	**$9.31**

PENNSYLVANIA, Methacton, Norristown
Enrollment 3,232

Number of persons in job	32
Low	$9.15
High	$11.77
Average	**$9.62**

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Name: Gloria Willmarth

Local Association, state: Lake Holcombe ESP, Wisconsin

Years of service: 25

Current pay: $6.40 an hour, 35 hours a week, 9 months a year

Most recent major purchase: Snowmobiles.

Biggest financial worry: Paying for a college education for my teenager.

I think I'm worth: $10 an hour.

Most rewarding on-the-job moment: I put in a long seven-hour day, but it's a rewarding day when I'm involved with the students.

I'm looking forward to: Retirement—in about 7 years.

PAYROLL CLERKS

National Average Salary, 1990-91	**$21,202**
National Average Salary, 1991-92	**$22,215**
Percent Salary Increase	**4.8**

1991-91 SALARIES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

FLORIDA, Pinellas County, Clearwater
Enrollment 96,592

Number of persons in job	34
Low	$11,652
High	$23,119
Average	**$18,488**

IDAHO, Boise
Enrollment 23,108

Number of persons in job	26
Low	$10,280
High	$24,352
Average	**$15,977**

MICHIGAN, Ann Arbor
Enrollment 14,603

Number of persons in job	13
Low	$19,514
High	$27,353
Average	**$24,125**

MISSISSIPPI, Columbia
Enrollment 2,011

Number of persons in job	2
Low	$20,300
High	$20,300
Average	**$20,300**

MISSOURI, Hazelwood, Florissant
Enrollment 17,602

Number of persons in job	3
Low	$17,798
High	$20,250
Average	**$18,620**

NEW MEXICO, Los Lunas
Enrollment 5,755

Number of persons in job	5
Low	$17,527
High	$24,927
Average	**$20,668**

OHIO, Dublin
Enrollment 8,147

Number of persons in job	2
Low	$22,176
High	$23,077
Average	**$22,627**

PENNSYLVANIA, Methacton, Norristown
Enrollment 3,232

Number of persons in job	3
Low	$15,754
High	$25,551
Average	**$21,353**

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Name: Maria Aranyosi

Local Association, state: Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda School Employees Association, New York

Years of service: 11

Current pay: $11.28 an hour, 20 hours a week, 12 months a year

Most recent major purchase: Some sofas I just bought for my house.

Biggest financial worry: That the company my husband works for could close down, and he'd lose his job.

I think I'm worth: Every penny I earn.

Most rewarding on-the-job moment: When I don't make any mistakes on anyone's paycheck.

I'm looking forward to: Landing a full-time job here.

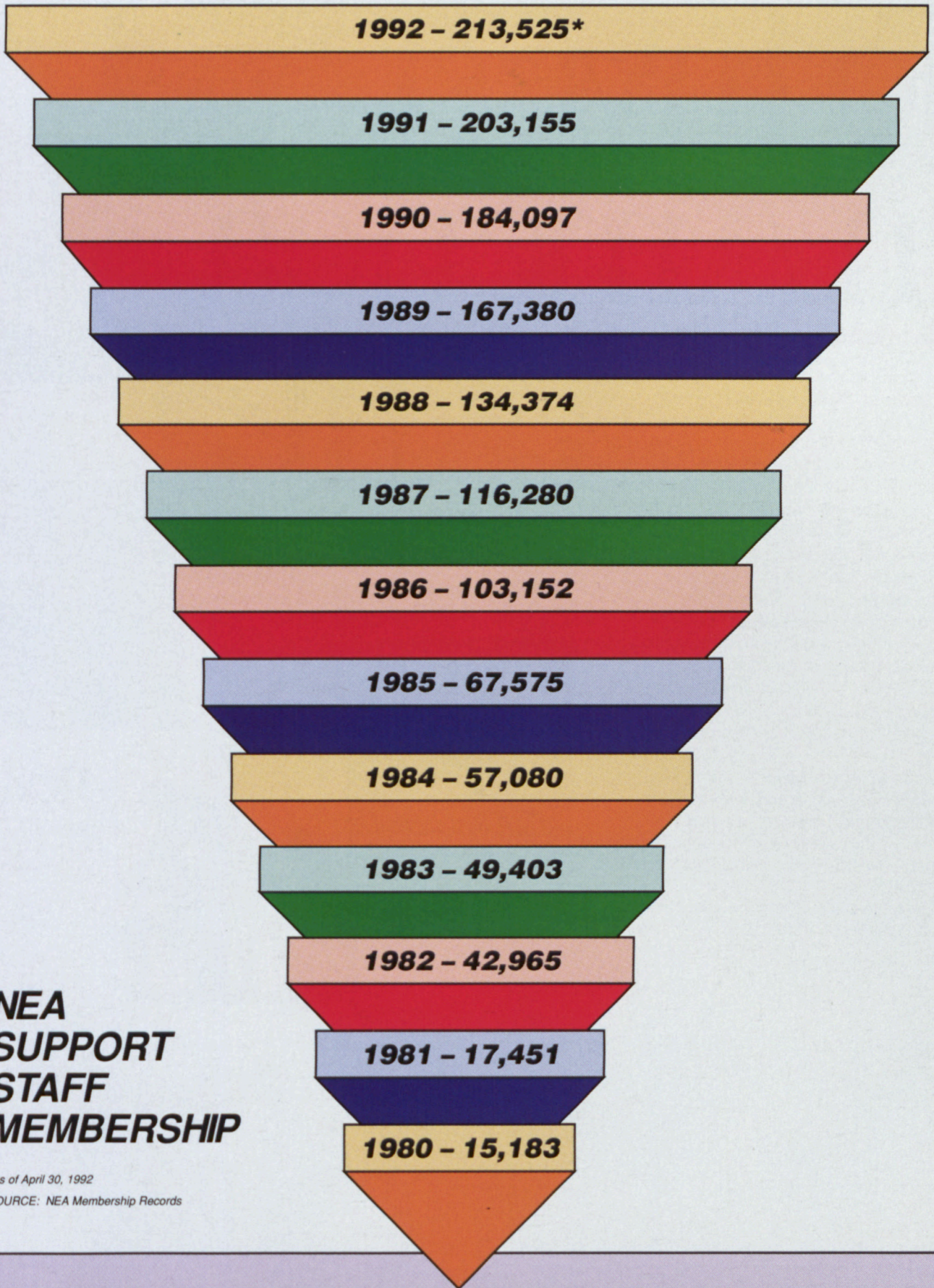
FACTS

A FEW FACTS FOR YOUR FILES

Sources: U.S. Department of Education; U.S. Census Bureau; Economic Policy Institute; The Earth Works Press; *The Nation* magazine; Nutrition Action Healthletter; *What Counts: The Complete Harper's Index*; Children's Defense Fund; National Assessment of Educational Progress; *USA Today*; National Association of Secondary School Principals; Liberty Mutual Insurance; U.S. Department of Agriculture; Families USA Foundation; Center for Defense Information; National Education Association.

- Number of Americans directly involved in education as students, teachers, administrators, or support staff: 68.4 million
- Number of public school districts: 15,367
  Number of public schools: 83,425
- Hourly wage for average American worker:
  In 1979: $10.23 (in 1991 dollars) In 1991: $9.48
- Percentage of families with one parent:
  In 1970: 13 In 1990: 28
- Real median income of young families with children:
  In 1970: $23,705 (in 1990 dollars) In 1990: $16,219
- Cost to a middle-income family to raise a child born in 1990 to age 17: $210,000
- Average annual health payments by families in 1991 as a percentage of average family income: 11.7
- Number of trees that could be saved annually if all employees used just 5 percent less paper each year: 17 million
- Average number of paid vacation days per year:
  In Spain: 32 In Canada: 15
  In France: 27 In the United States: 11
- Maximum amount of sodium a person should eat in a day: 1,800 mg
  Amount of sodium in two slices of a large Pizza Hut Super Supreme Traditional Hand-Tossed Pizza: 2,200 mg
- Estimated amount the U.S. national debt will increase in the time it takes to read this statistic: $33,000
- Number of American teenagers killed each day by firearms: 10
- Percentage of 12th graders who say they use a library once—or not at all—each year: 61
- Percentage of 4th graders who see six hours or more of television a day: 25
- Percentage growth as a share of the U.S. population, 1980 to 1990:
  White: 6.0 Asian: 107.8 Native American: 37.9
  Black: 13.2 Hispanic: 53.0
- Percentage of Americans who drive to work alone:
  In 1980: 64.4 In 1990: 73.2
- Percentage of students who say their parents are rarely or never involved in their educations: 30
- Percentage of women who earn less than $25,000 a year: 81
  Percentage of men who earn less than $25,000 a year: 56
- Annual cost of U.S. defense of Japan: $10 billion
  Annual cost of providing school-based child care for America's 11 million latchkey children: $11 billion
- Percentage of teen car accidents that involve speeding: 25
- Number of students per school computer:
  In 1983-84: 125 In 1991-92: 18
- Percentage of 18-to-21-year-olds voting in Presidential elections:
  In 1972: 48.3 In 1988: 33.2

MEMBERSHIP

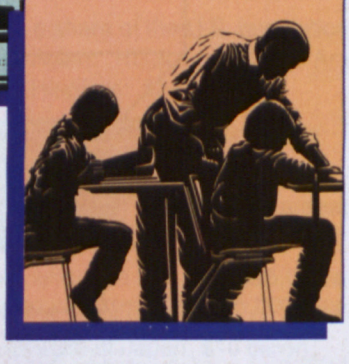


NEA SUPPORT STAFF MEMBERSHIP

*As of April 30, 1992

SOURCE: NEA Membership Records

It's Time To Invest In America



This can be the year we begin to invest in America again. And we've never needed it more. Our economy is faltering, jobs are disappearing. Our schools are falling short. Health care costs so much Americans can't afford to get sick.

But now the world has changed. The Soviet Union is no more. Germany is united. Europe is becoming one economy.

We can seize this historical opportunity to reinvest and rebuild America. Right now, we're spending billions of dollars defending Germany and Japan against a threat that no longer exists. In fact, we spend more to defend Germany than Germany spends to defend itself.

And while we continue to spend our money defending our economic competitors, Japan puts its money into jobs and quality education for its kids; Germany pays for health care for all its citizens.

Now it's America's turn. It's time to meet vital needs at home with military dollars no longer needed abroad. It's America's turn to have quality schools, affordable health care, good jobs, and a strong economy.

This year, make sure the candidates who seek your vote know that you believe it's time to invest in America.

nea

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION